Hafa Adai!

NMTech seeks $1.62M budget for FY 2025. PAGE 2
US Supreme Court leaves 9th Circuit ruling in place. PAGE 3

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Persons of interest eyed in double homicide case

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety has reportedly identified "persons of interest" in the case involving the homicide that occurred at a Finasisu home last Thursday.

This comes as the female victim, Liu Shuping (also known as Lily), was pronounced dead at 8:01pm last Monday evening after being on life support at the Commonwealth Health Center since being found last Thursday in her residence.

Her partner, Wang Jingdong, was the first to succumb to his injuries as he was found dead in the same location.

See HOMICIDE on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Wang Jingdong, the male victim in the Finasisu murders reported last week.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Liu Shuping, aka Lily, the female victim in the Finasisu murders reported last week.

Cop accuses CSC of OGA violation

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Department of Public Safety officer who previously filed grievances against the department with the Civil Service Commission has appealed to the Superior Court

See COP on Page 4

Manibusan: Electronic Gaming bill constitutionally sufficient

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Manibusan

Attorney General Edward Manibusan has determined that the electronic gaming bill that Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) had introduced as constitutionally sufficient as it is written.

Manibusan said House Bill 23-85, House Substitute 1, proposes

See GAMING on Page 4

Full circle for new Education commissioner

LEIGH GASES
From left, new Public School System Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence Camacho, former interim Education commissioner Donna Flores, and associate commissioner of Administration Eric Magofna, in the Commissioner's Office on Capital Hill yesterday afternoon during a press conference.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Dr. Lawrence Camacho, the new Education commissioner of the CNMI Public School System, has come full circle, returning to the CNMI to fulfill his passion of serving his people.

Camacho began his four-year tenure as Education commissioner last Monday, taking over the office that was held by interim Education commissioner Donna M. Flores for the past five months. Flores returns to her post as director of the Special Education Program of the CNMI Public School System

In a news briefing for the local media yesterday afternoon at the Commissioner's Office on Capital Hill, Camacho said he is committed to his new post. "I don't con-

See FULL on Page 4

LEIGH GASES
New Public School System Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence Camacho, left, and former interim Education commissioner Donna Flores answer questions during a press conference at the Commissioner's Office on Capital Hill yesterday afternoon.

INSIDE

NATION
Courting Black voters he needs to win reelection, President Joe Biden on Monday denounced the "poison" of white supremacy in America.
PAGE 12

WORLD
An Israeli airstrike killed an elite Hezbollah commander Monday in southern Lebanon, the latest in an escalating exchange of strikes across the border that have raised fears of another Mideast war.
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
Lisa Bonet has filed for divorce from Jason Momoa 18 years after the two actors became a couple.
PAGE 15

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Local

NMTech seeks $1.62M budget for FY 2025

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Technical Institute, a nonprofit public corporation, submitted last week to the Legislature a $1.62-million budget request for fiscal year 2025.

NMTech, through its chief executive officer Jodina Attao, requested $7,436 to cover all board of trustees' operations; $479,291 to pay for 10 administrative personnel; $924,175 in Commonwealth Worker Funds to cover 21 student-related personnel plus operational needs; and $221,420 in Compact Impact Funds to cover travel plus operational needs.

In trumpeting the institute's accomplishments so far, Attao said 19 of NMTech's 22 goals in its fiscal year 2023 action plan have been successfully achieved.

One is an ongoing project with its first phase now completed as planned, while three will be carried over into fiscal year 2024 as ongoing efforts for planning, coordination, and implementation, Attao said.

Last year's budget law, the FY 2024 Appropriation Act, allocated just $1 for NMTech. The institute, however, receives CNMI-Only Transitional Workers fee funds from the federal government, and grants. CNMI employers who employ foreign workers are mandated to pay into the CNMI-Only Transitional Workers fee funds and the federal government gives that money back to the CNMI.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

The Northern Marianas Technical Institute in Lower Base.

SAIPAN WELCOMES THE MSC *BELISSIMA* CNMI OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR/

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang recently greeted captain Francesco Saverio Veniero, second from right, of the MSC *Belissima*, a Meraviglia-class cruise ship from the renowned Swiss global cruise line, MSC Cruises. The ship made a port visit to Saipan last Thursday morning, allowing its passengers, totaling up to 5,686 guests, to disembark and partake in various tour activities on the island. In the photo, Palacios and Apatang are joined by Port of Saipan manager/CNMI harbor master Jerra Mae B. Cing and MSC *Belissima* hotel director Tizaiana Sorrentino.

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

4.9-magnitude earthquake in Maug

At 5:39pm on Jan. 8, 2024, a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Maug Islands region, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

5.0-magnitude earthquake in Merizo Village

At 4:58pm on Jan. 7, 2024, a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred 210 km southwest of Merizo Village, Guam. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

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HERE FOR SAIPAN. HERE FOR LIFE.

US Supreme Court leaves 9th Circuit ruling in place

» CCC may continue with revocation proceedings vs. IPI casino license

The U.S. Supreme Court denied certiorari to Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC yesterday, leaving in place a U.S. Ninth Circuit ruling that allows the Commonwealth Casino Commission to continue its revocation proceedings against IPI's casino license.

"This victory is important for the people of the Commonwealth in enforcing IPI's failure to meet its contractual and statutory obligations to the people of the CNMI," said Attorney General Edward Manibusan.

In in a news release the OAG issued yesterday to announce the U.S. Supreme Court decision, it stated that IPI had sought the U.S. Supreme Court's review of the Ninth Circuit order ruling that the CCC was not required to enter into non-binding arbitration regarding license revocation proceedings and could continue with its revocation of IPI's casino license. By declining to hear the case, the U.S. Supreme Court left in place the Ninth Circuit ruling.

A revocation proceeding is now scheduled for Jan. 31, 2024. ***(PR)***

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's Imperial Pacific Resort in Garapan is seen here in this file photo.

NMHC asks SNILD to reconsider diverting use of $300K

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A local bill that proposes to re-appropriate funds under a Saipan local law involves the $300,000 seed money that was initially to be allocated to the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. for its rental and/or home loan programs, according to NMHC corporate director Jesse S. Palacios.

Palacios

In written comments Thursday on House Local Bill 23-36, Palacios said NMHC acknowledges the pressing need to address outstanding obligations and to enhance infrastructure, but lawmakers should consider the broader impact of re-appropriating the $300,000.

Saipan Local Law 21-13 aims divert the use of that money to address outstanding medical referral obligations and fund road and drainage upgrades in Kagman.

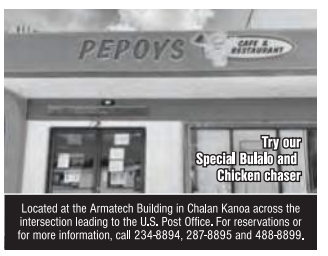
Palacios pointed out, though that the amount is a "unique opportunity" for the CNMI to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing and could potentially make a substantial difference for families aspiring to become first-time homeowners or for existing homeowners in need of critical home repairs to make their homes typhoon-proof.

Introduced by Rep. Angelo A. Camacho (Ind-Saipan), House Local Bill 23-36 seeks to re-appropriate $300,000 from Saipan Local Law 21-13. Of the $300,000, $60,000 will be used to pay for outstanding medical referral obligations owed the Saipan Employment Agency & Services Inc. The remaining $240,000 will be used for road anti-skid resurfacing on Chacha Road in Kagman 1 and for a ponding basin in Kagman 3.

In his letter to Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation chair Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan), Palacios said NMHC envisions using this funding in collaboration with federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HOME Program to be able to extend a partnership-type loan program that would allow NMHC to assist a broader spectrum of applicants, enabling them to build, acquire, or rehabilitate their homes.

He said another avenue in mind is to extend this funding as a direct loan to higher-income households that surpass federal low-income guidelines.

By offering low-interest bearing loans, he said, NMHC aims to establish a revolving loan program, ultimately benefitting more families seeking affordable housing solutions.



Located at the Armatech Building in Chalan Kanoa across the intersection leading to the U.S. Post Office. For reservations or for more information, call 234-8894, 287-8895 and 488-8899.

Name: Markisha Manalo
Address: P.O. Box 503206

Phone: (670) 284-7618

Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Re the Matter of the Petition for the Appointment of General Guardianship for:	] FCD-GU CIVIL] ACTION] NO. 23-0492]]]	
M.A.P.B.Jr. Minor Child(ren)	]	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
By:	]]]	
Markisha Manalo Petitioner(s)	]]]	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on February 14, 2024 at 1:30 p.m. in Courtroom 217A before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 18th day of December, 2023.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court

/s/_____
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2024

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, **through the** Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an **estimated** $1,550,603.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of $980,125.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); $489,268.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and, $81,210.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2024.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of persons. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single-family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention **and rapid re-housing** activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

Applications for the use of CPD funds are available for pick up at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) located in Garapan, Saipan; NMC Campus Bldg. A, San Jose Village, Tinian; and, Sinapalo III Village, Rota, beginning December 13, 2023.

You may also obtain the application online at www.nmhcgov.net in the section titled "Community Planning Development (CDBG)"

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Residents); NMC Bldg. A, San Jose, Tinian (Tinian Residents); and, Sinapalo III Village, Rota (Rota Residents) by ***March 13, 2024, no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications submitted after March 13, 2024, will not be accepted.***

A briefing will be conducted for interested applicants and for those applicants who have picked up an application for the use of CPD funds. The briefing will address the program requirements and regulations concerning the usage of CPD funds.

The schedules for briefing are as follows:

February 14, 2024, 5:30 p.m. for the island of Saipan
February 15, 2024, 5:30 p.m. for the island of Tinian
February 16, 2024 5:30 p.m. for the island of Rota

We are encouraging all non-profit, for profit, and government service providers who are providing services to people with disabilities, homeless individuals, and emergency shelter administrators and operators to attend this briefing.

For residents living on the island of Saipan, the briefing will held at the NMHC Office in Garapan; Residents living on the island of Tinian, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office at the NMC Campus, Building A; and Residents living on the island of Rota, the briefing will be held at the Rota Mayor's Office Conference Room in Tatachog.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided. Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, such as eligibility criteria and program requirements, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner at 234-6866 or 233-0076

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

Michelle Masga is Gold's Gym Saipan's new ass't manager

Gold's Gym Saipan announced yesterday the appointment of Michelle Masga as the new assistant manager, bringing with her a wealth of experience, dedication, and passion for fitness to her new role.

Masga

Masga joined Gold's Gym in August 2016 and quickly became an integral part of the team. In November 2017, she achieved her NASM certified personal trainer qualification, showcasing her commitment to professional growth within the fitness industry.

During her time with Gold's Gym, Masga has held various roles, including customer service representative, personal trainer, fitness instructor, and has actively contributed behind the scenes with accounts receivables. Her exceptional attention to customer service, positive attitude, and collaborative spirit have made her not only easy to work with but also highly respected by her peers. Masga is known for her creativity, dedication, and strong work ethic, making her a valuable asset to Gold Gym Saipan's team.

Galang

"We would also like to express our gratitude to the outgoing assistant manager, Gerald Galang, who has been an integral part of our team for nearly 10 years. Galang played a crucial role in facilitating a smooth transition as Masga assumes her new position. Galang will be greatly missed by his Gold's Gym family, and we wish him and his family the best on their new adventure as he takes on an active duty position with the U.S. military," said a Gold's Gym statement.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Gold's Gym Saipan in Garapan.

Gold's Gym Saipan remains committed to providing top-quality fitness experiences to its valued members.

"With Masga stepping into the role of assistant manager, we are confident in our ability to continue delivering exceptional service and fostering a supportive fitness environment. Please join us in welcoming Masga. …We look forward to the positive impact she will undoubtedly bring to our team and the exciting future ahead," Gold's Gym added in its statement.

For further information or media inquiries, contact Tyce Mister, general manager, at info@goldsgymsaipan@gmail.com or (670) 233-4000

Gold's Gym Saipan is a leading fitness facility committed to helping individuals achieve their potential through fitness. With state-of-the-art equipment, a variety of classes, and a dedicated team of fitness professionals, Gold's Gym Saipan provides a welcoming and motivating environment for people of all fitness levels. ***(PR)***

GAMING

From page 1

to lower the exemption to operate electronic gaming activities from 100 rooms to 30 rooms for resort properties located within the bounds of Garapan.

He did not comment further on the bill.

Manibusan did inform Yumul in a recent letter that he is available to discuss further issues raised in the legislation and that the lawmaker is free to contact him.

Yumul, who chairs the House of Representatives Gaming Committee, requested the Office of the Attorney General to comment on the legislation.

The bill originally will allow businesses on Saipan that cumulatively own more than 100 hotel rooms to engage in electronic gaming activities.

The revised bill proposes to amend the statute by adding a new subjection, which reads that "the hotel room is defined as a hotel, lodging house, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, rooming house, but not a private residence, bed and breakfast, condominium, or similar facility that is within an area or neighborhood that is primarily residentials, that 1) serves or functions primarily as a room for transient accommodations by a paying guest and 2) has an area of not less than 135 square feet."

The substitute bill proposes that gaming activities within Saipan is allowed only in an enclosed area or resort premises that have 100 or more rooms, or 30 or more rooms if located on land within Garapan.

COP

From page 1

the commission's final decision that dismissed his grievances, alleging violation of the Open Government Act.

Sgt. Peter Raymond Camacho, through his lawyers, Robert Torres and Oliver Manglona, has appealed the commission's decision denying the grievances he filed against DPS, alleging that the commission violated his rights, as well as the Open Government Act.

According to Camacho's lawyers, the commission violated Camacho's substantive and procedural due process rights by failing to notify him of a Dec. 5, 2023, special meeting and depriving him the opportunity for his grievances to be heard.

In addition, Camacho's lawyers claim that the commission decided to unanimously deny Camacho's grievances after deliberating in an executive session that's away from the public and thus violating the CNMI Open Government Act.

"Because the commission's deliberation of Sgt. Camacho's grievances was held in secrecy and the record produced by the commission does not contain the meeting minutes or records of the commission's deliberation, Sgt. Camacho is unaware of the basis supporting the commission's decision," states the appeal.

"Additionally, the commission's failure to provide record and documents of its committee meetings that involved Sgt. Camacho grievances violated the Open Government Act, which requires that committee minutes be noticed and open to the public," the appeal added.

DPS was also named a party in the appeal, as Camacho claims DPS also violated his due process rights by allegedly precluding him from applying for a salary increase.

"DPS violated Sgt. Camacho's substantive due process rights by precluding him from applying for the merit-based salary increase in DPS' examination announcement nos. 20-01 7 and 20-025 when he is a top qualifying candidate under those announcements and is an active, permanent civil service employee in the government," said the appeal.

Camacho also alleges that DPS selected unqualified candidates for the salary increase, violating the open, competitive selection policies of the CSC's rules and regulations.

"Specifically, DPS selected ineligible and unqualified candidates for announcement nos. 20-017 and 20-025 who did not meet the qualification requirements under those announcements and in doing so, violated the open, competitive selection policies of the Civil Service's Personnel System Rules and Regulations," said the appeal.

HOMICIDE

From page 1

The CNMI is now officially dealing with a double homicide case.

According to DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau commander Jeff Olopai, CIB has identified several persons of interest in this case.

"There are several persons we are looking into at this point in time. We have identified several people of interest, but we have not implemented travel bans at this time. We believe there was more than one individual in the residence [during the] incident. We are hoping to get more feedback from the community and more tips. That's all we have right now," he said.

As DPS dives deeper into their investigation into the homicides, it was discovered that the couple had called for police assistance two weeks prior to the murder to report a break-in. DPS now says there is a possibility that the previous break in may be tied to the murders.

"The victims had called for police assistance two weeks prior to the murder, reporting a break-in. There's a possibility that the break-in had something to do with the homicide. Police continue to investigate this angle. We are still trying to determine if the murders were random and a result of a random burglary, or if it was more deliberate, like it was ordered or planned out. No motive has been determined yet," he said.

Olopai said a murder weapon has been identified but could not disclose further details in order to maintain the integrity of the investigation.

"We can disclose that there was a weapon used in this case. We cannot disclose how it was determined at this time. Domestic violence has been ruled out. DPS is in the process of sending off evidence found at the crime scene, like fingerprints, while a medical examiner has since conducted an autopsy on the victims," he said.

Dr. Phillip Dauterman conducted the autopsies.

Olopai also noted that the male victim, Wang, is known to police as he previously lived near a residence that was once being investigate for illegal drugs. He was never investigated.

As the investigation continues, DPS has called on federal partners.

"They're helping us in terms of going through cellphone records, border crossings, departures, arrivals," he said.

DPS Commissioner Clement Bermudes said he is determined to keep the public updates regarding the killings and also seeks the assistance of the community in closing the case.

"We regret to inform the public that we are now dealing with a double homicide and our sympathy goes out to the family who arrived over the weekend to identify the deceased. Any information and any tips will be useful. Our Criminal Investigation Bureau has been working long days to see and follow every angle, every possibility in this double homicide. We all want closure in this case. Every little detail helps as it could be an important piece to this puzzle," he said.

Bermudes encourages anyone who may know anything, no matter how small the detail, to call DPS or Crimes Stoppers if they want to remain anonymous.

"We are pursuing every possible angle. I know the public has their own theories so we want to make sure we're following every angle so every tip is useful to ensure that we can provide closure for this case and for the family so that the community feels safer. I know there is hesitance from the community but we're committed to ensuring the safety of our community," he said.

FULL

From page 1

sider this as just another job that we apply for and come get paid to do. I consider it a calling. …I believe that the CNMI invested in me to be at this point in my life. I am a retiree of the United States Army, I have gone through my education...with three master's degrees and a doctoral degree, so I believe that's enough for me to come home finally and eventually give back to our community," said Camacho.

In describing his goals as the CNMI's Education chief, Camacho said his main goal is to help students graduate.

"My No. 1 priority is to have students come here and enjoy their time in our school district. I want students to be able to say, 'I am in the CNMI Public School System because I'm learning, I'm enjoying my time, I'm growing, I'm developing', and then for us to guide those students and then eventually graduate," he said.

And it's not just about letting students graduate and that's the end of it. "The other thing is that we have to guide them through this process and…we're hoping that when they eventually graduate, they know where they're going—whether it's straight into the workforce, whether it's in higher education, or they go into the trades," said Camacho.

He said he wants to establish what he describes as a "triboard"—a collaboration among the PSS Board of Education, Northern Marianas College Board of Regents, and the Northern Marianas Technical Institute's board of trustees.

He said he dreams of a triboard where "we are the executive officers. We're going to make sure that they're executing the policies, but at the policy making level, those three boards can collaborate and drive us to ensure that we have policies that are aligned with them."

He added, "I'm hoping that the board also understands the direction of our economy—our Commonwealth's direction for economic advancement. …We're developing problem solvers. We're developing leaders, and they're going to be the ones who are going to be out there in the future. But we need to understand where that future is and what that future looks like."

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

Transit CNMI's newest bus route serves more than 5K passengers

COTA

From Nov. 24 to Dec. 31, 2023, a total of 5,337 riders embraced the convenience and accessibility of Transit CNMI's Blue Line 1B.

After making history with the launch of the CNMI's first-ever dual-directional bus route, the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority is thrilled to announce the success of Transit CNMI's Blue Line bus route in its inaugural month of operations.

From Nov. 24 to Dec. 31, 2023, a total of 5,337 riders embraced the convenience and accessibility of Transit CNMI's Blue Line 1B, surpassing expectations and underlining the community's enthusiasm for reliable public transportation.

Public Transportation special assistant Alfreda Camacho Maratita says the significant passenger numbers in the first month of service are indicative of the ongoing need for public transportation.

"In just a handful of weeks, our passengers have shown us how much they appreciate Transit CNMI's service," Maratita said. "The Blue Line 1B is just the start of what we've designed to answer the demands of our increasingly mobile community."

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios likewise congratulated COTA for a successful launch of Transit CNMI's newest bus route.

"The very positive response underscores the pressing need for reliable public transportation," Palacios said. "I commend the vision and dedication of everyone involved, and I look forward to further advancements in meeting the evolving mobility needs of our community."

Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang said that he is pleased with the high number of passengers on the Blue Line 1B.

"I commend COTA and its dedicated team for their hard work and vision in bringing this service to fruition," Apatang said. "The success of the Blue Line 1B reflects our commitment to enhancing the lives of our residents through reliable and efficient transit options."

Transit CNMI's Blue Line 1B currently features two buses traveling simultaneously, one northbound and one southbound, with stops in key locations from Garapan to Koblerville.

Fare structure effective Jan. 1, 2024

Beginning Jan. 1, 2024, each trip on the Blue Line will be priced at $1. In addition, Transit CNMI offers discounted rates of $0.50 for students, veterans, active-duty military, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities. Day passes are also available for $5 per day to the general public, or a discounted rate of $2.50 per day for students, veterans, active-duty military, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities.

Passengers can pay on the bus with cash (exact change only) or obtain bus passes from 7:30am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday at COTA's administrative offices which are located on the fourth floor of the Marianas Business Plaza in Suite 410.

For more information about Transit CNMI, including rates, times, and the list of stops, visit transit.cnmi.gov or contact (670) 236-2682. ***(COTA)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-005

OFFICE SPACE LEASE FOR CUC ROTA's ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS & OPERATIONS

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the lease of a suitable office and operations support facility for the Headquarters of CUC's Administration and Operations on the island of Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The proposed office space must comply with American Disabilities Act (ADA), DPW, OSHA and CNMI Zoning regulation.

The IFB package may be obtained at the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration with CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package will be emailed to the registered Proponents email ID. For registration inquiries, please email Marcela Tenorio, CUC Senior Administrative Technician via email address, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-24-005, Office Space Lease for CUC Rota's Administrative Functions and Operations."* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 9, 2024,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 18, 2024 to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Alvin King, CUC Rota Resident Manager at email address alvin.king@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 |
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

INVITATION FOR BID
PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-001-24(REPACKAGED)

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 10, 2024: 2:00 P.M.

"SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF TWO (2) BRAND NEW PICK-UP TRUCKS TO THE FRANCISCO MANGLONA BORJA TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT"

THE BID PACKAGE IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP BEGINNING DECEMBER 27, 2023 AT THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY, 2ND FLOOR, DEPARTURE BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT UPON PAYMENT OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE FEE OF $100. PAYMENT SHALL BE MADE IN CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK, CREDIT CARD, OR U.S. POSTAL MONEY ORDER. ALL APPLICANTS SHALL PAY THE $100.00 TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THE BID.

BIDDERS ARE TO SUBMIT ONE (1) ORIGINAL AND TWO (2) COPIES IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND MARKED "SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF TWO (02) BRAND NEW PICK-UP TRUCKS TO THE FRANCISCO MANGLONA BORJA TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT **(IFB-001-24-REPACKAGED)**" TO THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON OR **BEFORE 2:00 P.M., JANUARY 10, 2024. A 10% BID BOND OR CASHEIR'S CHECK PAYABLE TO CPA SHALL BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID DOCUMENTS.** BIDDERS SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATIONS ALL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCUREMENT BEFORE FINALIZING ITS BID PRICE.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020 AND 1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CPA.

LEO B. TUDELA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DATE: _____

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
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INVITATION FOR BID
PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-005-24

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 10, 2024: 2:00 P.M.

"SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF TWO (2) BRAND NEW VEHICLES. ONE UNIT FOR THE FRANCISCO C ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND ONE UNIT FOR THE FRANCISCO M. BORJA/TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT"

THE BID PACKAGE IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP BEGINNING DECEMBER 27, 2023 AT THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY, 2ND FLOOR, DEPARTURE BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT UPON PAYMENT OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE FEE OF $100. PAYMENT SHALL BE MADE IN CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK, CREDIT CARD, OR U.S. POSTAL MONEY ORDER. ALL APPLICANTS SHALL PAY THE $100.00 TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THE BID.

BIDDERS ARE TO SUBMIT ONE (1) ORIGINAL AND TWO (2) COPIES IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND MARKED "SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF TWO (02) BRAND NEW VEHICLES **(IFB-005-24)**" TO THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON OR **BEFORE 2:00 P.M., JANUARY 10, 2024. A 10% BID BOND OR CASHEIR'S CHECK PAYABLE TO CPA SHALL BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID DOCUMENTS.** BIDDERS SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATIONS ALL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCUREMENT BEFORE FINALIZING ITS BID PRICE.

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LEO B. TUDELA
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INVITATION FOR BID
PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-003-24-(REPACKAGED)

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 10, 2024: 2:00 P.M.

"SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF TWO (2) BRAND NEW SXS UTILITY VEHICLES. ONE UNIT FOR THE FRANCISCO C ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND ONE UNIT FOR THE FRANCISCO M. BORJA/TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT"

THE BID PACKAGE IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP BEGINNING DECEMBER 27, 2023 AT THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY, 2ND FLOOR, DEPARTURE BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT UPON PAYMENT OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE FEE OF $100. PAYMENT SHALL BE MADE IN CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK, CREDIT CARD, OR U.S. POSTAL MONEY ORDER. ALL APPLICANTS SHALL PAY THE $100.00 TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THE BID.

BIDDERS ARE TO SUBMIT ONE (1) ORIGINAL AND TWO (2) COPIES OF THEIR BIDS IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND MARKED "SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF TWO (02) BRAND NEW SXS UTILITY VEHICLES **(IFB-003-24-REPACKAGED)**" TO THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON OR **BEFORE 2:00 P.M., JANUARY 10, 2024. A 10% BID BOND OR CASHEIR'S CHECK PAYABLE TO CPA SHALL BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID DOCUMENTS.** BIDDERS SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATIONS ALL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCUREMENT BEFORE FINALIZING ITS BID PRICE.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020 AND 1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CPA.

LEO B. TUDELA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DATE: _____

Saipan Lions hold self-care team-building activities

The Lions Clubs International, Region 2, District 204 held its New Year's celebration and the first-ever team-building activities at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan last Jan. 7.

Attended by members, Leos, friends, and families, district governor Blanca Imbo from Guam joined the activities full of games, and raffles, while enjoying the food and fellowship.

Team building programs are the process of forming and strengthening teams within an organization and this is also part of self-care.

PHOTOS BY MARIO MAYUGA

Pacific Community deploying for first time recycled satellite buoys from drifting FADs

NOUMEA, New-Caledonia—In a groundbreaking action to combat marine pollution, the Pacific Community announces the inaugural deployment of recycled buoys from drifting Fish Aggregating Devices in their region, starting with the waters of New Caledonia. This marks a crucial stride toward sustainable ocean resource management. This initiative has been possible thanks to Project ReCon, a collaborative circular economy scheme created by tech company Satlink in 2022.

Since 2019, SPC has been assisting national data collection programmes on stranded dFADs in the Pacific Ocean, collaborating with stakeholders such as fisheries departments, NGOs and local community groups. "This project allows the region to monitor the number of dFADs lost and abandoned by industrial fishers and their environmental impacts while raising awareness and involving local communities," said Dr. Lauriane Escalle, Senior Fisheries Scientist in charge of the programme.

The regular discovery of buoys lost by industrial purse seine fishers on the shores of New Caledonia and other Pacific islands countries and territories, as well as the recent deployment of satellite buoys on anchored Fish Aggregating Devices to support coastal fishers, has created the perfect scenario for re-purposing the found buoys for use on those nearshore aFADs, turning what would-be-waste into a resource.

"This initiative highlights our commitment to supporting sustainable ocean resource management within the region. Reconditioning and recycling buoys for local use contributes to a circular economy and mitigates the environmental impact of stranded FADs in the Pacific," said Dr. Graham Pilling, SPC Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems division deputy director and head of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme.

With more than 30,000 buoys deployed on dFADs each year by industrial fishers and many ending up on the shores of Pacific nations, the need to reduce marine pollution is evident. Recently, SPC joined Satlink's Project ReCon, continuing a fruitful collaboration with the Spanish technology company, known for its close collaboration with much of the Pacific fishery industry, to address the environmental impact of stranded buoys.

Kathryn Gavira, Satlink's head of Science and Sustainability, acknowledges, "Satlink is proud to count on SPC as a local partner for Project ReCon. We are committed to working together with the fleets to reduce the environmental impacts of their activities, in this case through the reconditioning or recycling of satellite buoys recovered on shore. Together, we are working towards a more sustainable future for the Pacific Ocean."

To be able to recondition the buoys, Satlink has garnered support from more than 20 companies that agree to transfer the buoy to a local partner for reuse. Then an evaluation is carried out by Satlink, SPC and other partners to determine the suitability of a recovered buoy for re-use.

This historic first deployment of recycled buoys on aFADs in the Pacific is a significant milestone, with plans to extend the initiative to the Cook Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia in the coming months.

About Project ReCon:
Satlink's Project ReCon is a global collaborative circular economy initiative to reduce marine pollution from industrial fishing. It focuses on the reconditioning or recycling of buoys from dFADs found stranded on the shore of Pacific countries and territories. Through partnerships with purse seine companies, regional organizations like SPC, fisheries departments, NGOs and local communities, Project ReCon strives to mitigate the environmental impact of stranded buoys and create a circular economy for the benefit of Pacific ecosystems and communities. ***(SPC)***

Self-care is the process of establishing behaviors to ensure holistic well-being of oneself, to promote health, and actively manage illness when it occurs.

Individuals engage in self-care daily, with food choices, exercise, sleep, and hygiene.

Lions members need self-care to take care of themselves so that they can be healthy, they can be well, they can do their jobs, help and care for others, and do all the things they need and want to accomplish which being a Lions member is all about.

Lions have done a lot for the communities and having this kind of activity is just a give-back to all members. In a way, it's the clubs' way for them to unwind, relax, play, dance, and sing.

"As we continue serving the community, at the same time taking care of ourselves is needed. Self-care is vital in our lives," said region chair Annamae Adaza.

Special thanks to the donors of the raffle items, Imbo, immediate past district governor Loisa Cabuhat, second vice district governor Ronald Hidalgo, Naty Bui of Genpro International, and all committees and leaders.

Region 2, District 204 is composed of 12 clubs in which they are autonomous in their projects, activities, and fundraising. If you are interested in becoming a member, you can call Adaza at (670) 285-4388, zone chairs Arceli Lizama at (670) 287-6758, Argie Buensalido at (670) 789-0218), Marcelo Masilungan at (670) 483-9440, and district assistant secretary Tes Marquez at (670) 483-6524. **(PR)**

Rear Adm. Thomas visits US Coast Guard team in Guam

SANTA RITA, Guam—Rear Adm. Cari Thomas (retired), chief executive officer of Coast Guard Mutual Assistance, made her way to Guam, the first week in December 2023 to spend time with the U.S. Coast Guard team.

This visit underscores the commitment of CGMA

» Reaffirms how CGMA serves members

to support its members and their families, especially those stationed in remote locations like Guam.

"Caring for our Coast Guard family is not just a duty; it's a heartfelt commitment that gains depth and meaning when we meet face-to-face. Seeing our members and their families firsthand, hearing their stories, and understanding their challenges reinforces the importance of our mission at CGMA," said Thomas.

CGMA, an independent non-profit organization, plays a pivotal role as the official relief society of the U.S. Coast Guard. Established to provide financial assistance, disaster relief, and various forms of aid, CGMA has been a beacon of hope for many Coast Guard families facing emergencies, financial hardships, and disasters.

During her stay, Thomas engaged in impactful activities, starting with a command in-brief with U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam and Base Guam. Her interaction with department heads and senior enlisted members highlighted the mutual understanding and respect between CGMA and local U.S. Coast Guard leadership.

USCG

Rear Adm. Cari Thomas (retired), chief executive officer of Coast Guard Mutual Assistance, visited the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam and Base Guam from Dec. 5-7, 2023, in Santa Rita, Guam.

A key highlight of her visit was the CGMA Representative Meeting and the sharing of CGMA volunteer stories, showcasing CGMA's work's real-life impact. The tour of the USCGC *Myrtle Hazard* (WPC 1139) and U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor all-hands meeting provided Thomas with a firsthand look at the operational aspects of the Coast Guard in Guam.

"My long-term service, both in the Coast Guard and now with CGMA, has been driven by a deep-seated belief in serving those who dedicate their lives to protecting our nation. It's more than leadership; it's about being part of a community that stands together through thick and thin," said Thomas. "Every handshake, every conversation, every shared experience with our members in Guam and elsewhere strengthens my resolve to ensure that we, as a nation, are always there for them, just as they are always there for us."

Her involvement in the wardroom lunch and meetings with command spouses were not just formalities but a sincere effort to understand and acknowledge the challenges faced by U.S. Coast Guard families in Guam. These interactions are crucial in reinforcing the support system CGMA provides.

Thomas' meet-and-greet with Chaplain Min and Employee Assistance Program Liaison Mrs. Leon-Guerrero, along with her meeting with the local representatives of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, symbolize a collaborative spirit between different support organizations, ensuring comprehensive aid for service members.

The departure breakfast with the Spouses Club and coffee with Chiefs were fitting conclusions to her visit, encapsulating the essence of community and mutual support that CGMA champions.

Thomas has advocated for service members and their families throughout her illustrious career. Her subsequent work with the Navy League of the United States and her service on various committees, including the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services and the Navy Mutual Aid Association Board, reflect her dedication to the welfare of those who serve.

Her visit to Guam is not just a ceremonial gesture but a reaffirmation of CGMA's commitment, especially in light of their recent efforts during Typhoon Mawar, providing grants for property and food loss. With a history dating back to 1924 and having assisted over 30,000 members since 2018, CGMA's role in the U.S. Coast Guard community remains invaluable.

"Rear Adm. Cari Thomas' visit to Guam stands as a testament to the enduring support and solidarity of CGMA with the U.S. Coast Guard, especially in challenging and remote assignments like those in Micronesia," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "Her presence brought not just encouragement but also a renewed sense of community and resilience among the Coast Guard families in Guam." ***(USCG)***

USCG

Rear Adm. Cari Thomas has advocated for service members and their families throughout her illustrious career.

USCG

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance is an independent non-profit organization that plays a pivotal role as the official relief society of the U.S. Coast Guard.

USCG

During her stay, Rear Adm. Cari Thomas engaged in impactful activities, starting with a command in-brief with U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam and Base Guam.

USCG

A key highlight of Rear Adm. Cari Thomas' visit was the CGMA Representative Meeting and the sharing of CGMA volunteer stories, showcasing CGMA's work's real-life impact.

USCG

Rear Adm. Cari Thomas' visit underscored the commitment of CGMA to support its members and their families, especially those stationed in remote locations like Guam.

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Biden infrastructure bill: A failure to launch

With a new year comes hope in the White House that Americans will eventually buy into "Bidenomics." For instance, President Joe Biden would no doubt love to pose for pictures in front of some of the new projects funded by his $1.2 trillion infrastructure package.

Unfortunately, the administration's own policies have hampered his opportunities.

CNN reported last month that Biden has privately expressed immense frustration that it could be years before he can show off any of the wonders built thanks to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which he signed into law in November 2021.

But many of them remain years off—if they ever get built at all.

Some of the delays are beyond a president's control. "The government is simply not very efficient at doing much of anything," Reason magazine's Eric Boehm points out, "and major infrastructure projects take time to plan, organize and execute."

Yet many of the slowdowns and red tape are self-inflicted. Republicans have long advocated for removing hurdles to large federal projects. Typically such efforts are resisted by Biden's party. It also doesn't help that the infrastructure bill was filled with pork for green and union interests.

When Biden signed the measure into law, he not only renewed requirements that federally funded infrastructure projects use American-made iron and steel, but he also expanded these "Buy American" requirements to other construction materials such as lumber, drywall, copper wire and fiber optic cables. The law also included a provision limiting the ability of nonunion construction shops to bid on infrastructure jobs and "created delays by adding more paperwork and a confusing patchwork of new federal oversight for projects that sought funding," Boehm reports.

In addition, Biden's refusal to lift tariffs imposed by former President Donald Trump has kept prices for much-needed steel artificially high.

Biden's "Buy American" agenda may be popular with the public, but it's also at odds with his effort to quickly and efficiently complete infrastructure projects.

Boehm correctly notes that, instead of pandering to labor unions and political allies, the president could have pushed for an infrastructure bill that focused on actually building something in a speedy, cost-effective way, by providing a path to easing red tape. Instead he did the opposite.

Maybe voters are simply smarter than the White House realizes. Maybe they have picked up on the fact that "Bidenomics" and the infrastructure bill are a mishmash of inconsistencies masquerading as coherent economic policy.

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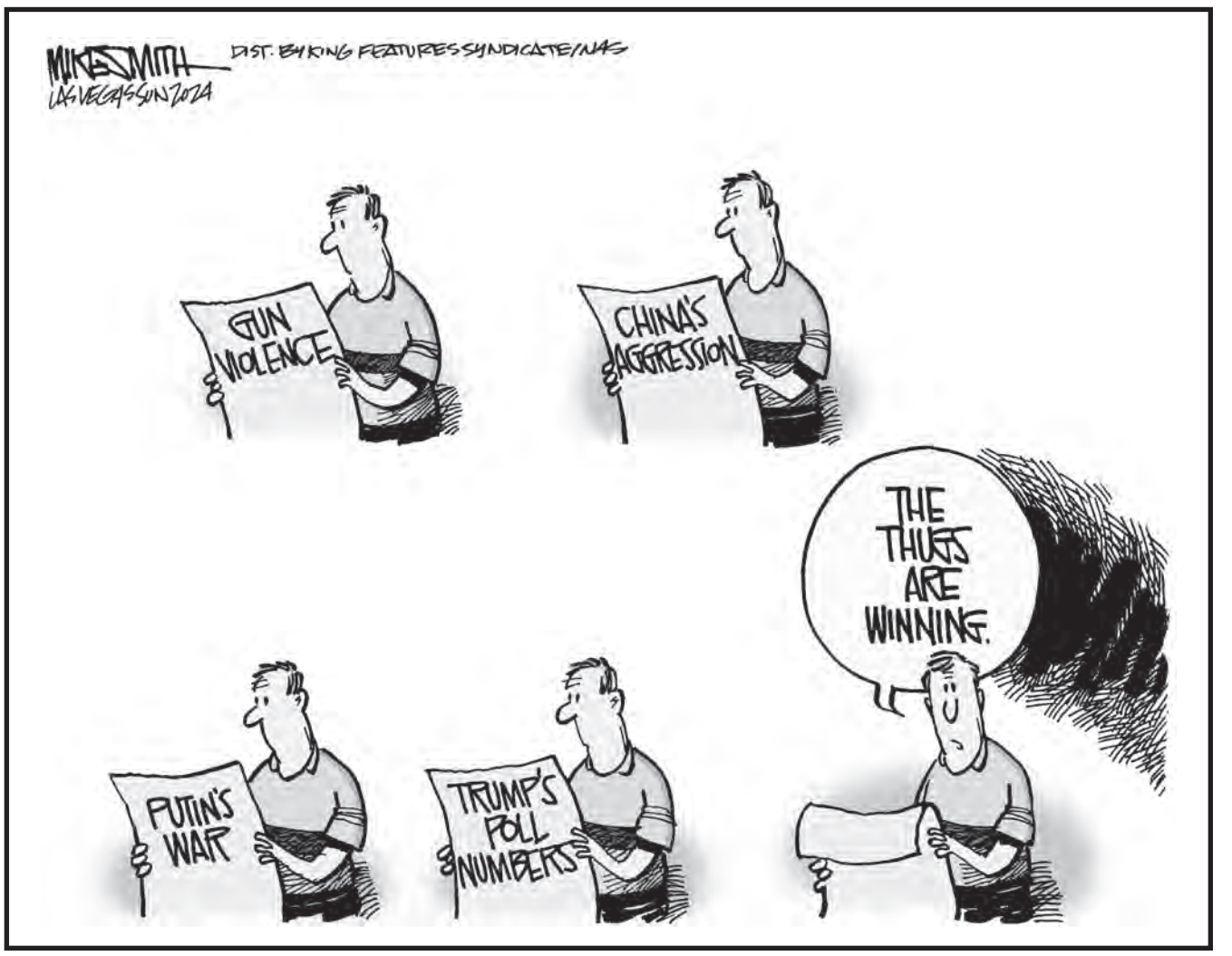


Iran threatens America as well as Israel

By JAY AMBROSE
Tribune News Service

Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service. Readers may email him at speaktojay@aol.com

Iran is an American enemy already, a pal with China and Russia, economically up-and-at-'em, more than a little pleased about its missile and warhead accomplishments, capable of producing nuclear weapons in a hurry and now in a war with Israel making the world less safe every minute. Possible consequences include a second international cold war threatening disastrous American decline or, conceivably, even a third world war.

Hey, wait a minute, you say, Iran is not at war with Israel; it's Hamas, the terrorist ruler of Gaza, the next-door neighbor accompanied by other Middle East groups such as the Houthis and Hezbollah lending a hand as needed.

Well, yes, that's the case with military action, but these proxies and others listen carefully to whatever Iran says. And, since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, it has talked about Israel as a "cancerous tumor" and a place that has to be "wiped off the map," for instance. Don't doubt that the urgent, self-enlarging, hateful impulse has been to kill all those Jews, to extinguish the menace, to rule the Middle East.

> **Iran has a long view that includes joining with China and Russia to rule the world. The three get together every now and then, and just as Iran receives benefits from the association, its vast reserves of oil help meet China's energy needs and it has sent Russia drones to help kill Ukrainians.**

Iran's leaders also hate America, much of Europe and large portions of the rest of the world. For a while, its nuclear and missile ambitions met significant resistance by way of sanctions that weakened it economically and threatened far more hurt in case of discovered transgressions.

Ah, but the United States elected Barack Obama as president and soon enough he was granted a Nobel Peace Prize for nothing much but eloquent utterances about being nice as the best means of achieving peace. Such was the background when the United States and a panel including China and Russia worked out a deal with Iran that let if off the sanctions hook and thereby enriched the country by billions.

Iran has lots of oil and doesn't need nuclear power for domestic energy, but the deal said, hey, keep that nuclear infrastructure that along with other means can allow pretty quick production of nuclear weapons. If you want to keep fooling around with missiles when the United Nations insists you shouldn't, well, go ahead even if we will be surprised when you come up with worrisome capabilities. Put it all together, and the deal should have been a far stricter treaty actually accomplishing something.

Well, a succeeding president, Donald Trump, got rid of the deal and began reinstating sanctions, something he could not have done if it had been a treaty, and himself deserved a Nobel Prize for another achievement. He and his advisers worked out a plan, something called the Abraham Accords, under which Arab countries are encouraged to establish friendly relations with Israel. The march began. Of course, after one term, Trump had a successor, too, namely Joe Biden, who tried one thing and then another that didn't work until here we are with Iran-supported Hamas committing one of the worst horrors of recent decades and Israel fighting back fiercely as a way of not being wiped off the map.

A ruler of some 90 million people, some of whom fiercely resent these super ambitious, cruelty insistent controllers of their lives, Iran has a long view that includes joining with China and Russia to rule the world. The three get together every now and then, and just as Iran receives benefits from the association, its vast reserves of oil help meet China's energy needs and it has sent Russia drones to help kill Ukrainians.

This year's presidential debates must address these issues as well as the outrageous antisemitism afflicting us, not least at elite universities that may someday be known as trash-heap universities. As a nation we have a host of issues, and, if we take it easy, they won't. The point right now is to focus on 2024 as a positive turning point.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A New Year's resolution: 'Don't Park in the Blue if it's not for You'

By CLEO NENING
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Cleo Nening is a programs coordinator at the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.

Happy New Year, CNMI! Now that the firework dust has settled and the champagne bottles are hopefully being recycled, perhaps now is an opportune time to revisit our New Year's resolutions. Did we decide to eat healthier? Or start a new fitness journey? Or maybe even start treating people with more kindness and compassion? With that in mind, let us reflect on how we can make positive changes in our lives and contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and considerate community. One area where we can have an immediate impact is to show respect for our people with disabilities who often include our man'amko by simply not parking in accessible spaces designated for persons with mobility limitations.

Allow me to shed light on a matter that holds great significance, especially for a friend of mine, John Allen, who relies on a wheelchair for mobility—from as soon as he gets up from bed to the moment he goes back to sleep. This wheelchair, which is an extension of him, gets him from one place to the other, just as we would in our means. However, when we do get to our needed destinations, such as our place of employment or a store, a glaring bright blue painted area should catch your attention. The blue-marked accessibility parking spaces serve as a lifeline for individuals like him, providing essential room to maneuver safely and ensuring convenient access to such establishments and facilities.

Regrettably, it has come to our attention that perfectly healthy individuals without any mobility limitations continue to park in these spaces without proper authorization and/or obstruct vital routes such as ramps. While it might seem like a quick and convenient solution for a brief stop, this practice creates significant challenges for those who depend on these spaces for their daily activities. Imagine needing one of those parking spots and every time you go to use it, it's occupied by someone who does not have a disability, but just needs to "grab something really quick." Not only does it violate the law, but it also shows a lack of understanding for those who depend on these spaces. It's not just about moving freely; it's about being part of a community that values everyone equally. Hence, we are calling for more enforcement of these violations by our police department, as individuals who commit these violations should be ticketed and fined.

In response to this issue, we would like to propose to everyone this simple yet impactful New Year's resolution for our entire community that we have utilized and advocated for many of our clients and individuals with disabilities: "Don't Park in the Blue if it's not for You." This short tagline speaks volumes for all to understand. If the accessible parking space is not for you, meaning that you do not have an accessible parking placard, do not park there. That means it is reserved for someone who does need it. By adhering to this resolution, we can collectively ensure that accessible parking spaces remain available for those who genuinely need them, fostering an environment characterized by empathy and understanding.

Let us consider the profound impact that this resolution can have on the lives of individuals with disabilities. Let's work together to create a community where everyone can move freely and independently, regardless of their limitations. As we continue our journey into 2024, let's embrace this resolution and make it a year of positive change and inclusivity for all, one accessible parking space at a time.

For more information on accessible parking call us at NMPASI (670) 235-7273/4, visit us online at www.nmpasi.org, or stop in at our new location, Marianas Business Plaza, fifth floor, Room 505.

Is 2024 the year you'll become an American expat?

By VIRGINIA HEFFERNAN
Los Angeles Times

Virginia Heffernan is a regular contributor to Wired and writes a newsletter, Magic and Loss, at virginiaheffernan.substack.com.

In 2000, Eddie Vedder, the Pearl Jam baritone and outspoken proponent of abortion rights, threatened to move to "a different country" if George W. Bush were elected president.

"With three Supreme Court positions opening in the next administration, I'm frightened to think of a Republican in office," he said.

The same year, Alec Baldwin reportedly said he'd leave if Bush won. So did the late director Robert Altman.

Bush won. Vedder stayed. Baldwin stayed. Altman stayed. The right-wing joke about huffy posturing by celebrities was born.

Indeed, the threat to leave the United States if X or Y is elected—or B or T—is usually both bombastic and empty. The common wisdom is that it's better not to make the threat at all. It's like divorce. You're not supposed to mention it unless you're ready to follow through.

But with pollsters telling us that "dread" tops the list of Americans' feelings about the 2024 election, and with Donald Trump hoping for an explicitly dictatorial White House comeback, the prospect of decamping for more democratic shores has fresh appeal. Hollow threats are foolish. But it's worth remembering a fundamental freedom: to move.

I've hardly ever thought about leaving the U.S. in political protest. Even after the elections of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, whose politics diverged steeply from my own, expatriating didn't cross my mind. Those two were democratically elected by an American majority.

Yes, being forced to accept presidents who were opposed by the majority of the American electorate—George W. Bush in 2000 and Donald Trump in 2016—was demoralizing. Presidents who slide into the Oval Office courtesy of gerrymandering and the ever-more-imbalanced electoral college, with flagrant assists from the Supreme Court (Bush) or the Kremlin (Trump) are terrible for morale in a democracy.

Still, I haven't yet fired up listings for rentals in Auckland, New Zealand, or Vancouver.

But accepting a leader who installs himself in the White House with a violent insurrection, as Trump tried to do just three years ago? That's where the expatriation fantasy kicks in in earnest.

In last year's sweeping history of human civilization, "The Dawn of Everything," the authors David Graeber and David Wengrow propose that human society requires three priceless freedoms: the freedom to disobey, the freedom to reimagine society and the freedom to move away.

To remember that we can indeed escape this country if the American experiment is hijacked is to send a signal to the nervous system that we're still free—in all three ways. Until all the borders and harbors and highways close, until every single plane is grounded and martial law instituted, we're not stuck here.

It's a deeply worthwhile practice of citizenship to visit the question of whether America has finally failed. After all, the origin story of many American families is escape. Consider it a thought experiment: What would it take for you to leave?

According to Gallup, record numbers of Americans seriously considered leaving the United States during Trump's term. Sixteen percent said they wanted to split for good. This was considerably higher than during the administrations of George W. Bush (11%) and Barack Obama (10%). Most notably, 40% of women under 30 told Gallup in 2019 that they'd like to leave. According to data collected last year by the Washington Post, the desire to get out spiked again after Roe vs. Wade was overturned in June 2022.

When I asked ChatGPT about emigrating to Canada I didn't exactly get the kindly "Come on in!" message I'd hoped for. Instead, it told me to try my luck with the Canadian bureaucracy—visas and family sponsorship, Express Entry and the Provincial Nominee Program.

At the same time, if you can find a foothold abroad, it's easier than ever to support yourself in foreign lands. Pandemic-era workforces remain far-flung. Last year, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that around 28% of private-sector establishments had employees teleworking some or all the time, and other research indicates that that percentage may be too low. You might be able to leave the U.S. and take your job with you.

And plenty of people do leave. In 2020, a prominent American legal journalist took her family to Canada, where she grew up. She's content no longer to live in the long shadow of our sold-out, far-right Supreme Court. A 26-year-old gay American, who presciently fled stateside political instability for Norway in 2019, convened a Reddit group called r/AmerExit to help others considering a move. One member, Richard Altfeld, headed to the Netherlands with his wife, Tiana Esperanza. A biracial couple, Altfeld and Esperanza were—among other things—fed up with American racism.

The urge to escape, of course, isn't only felt by liberals. Another Gallup poll finds that pride in being American is at near-record lows for Republicans.

If they're casting around for new homelands, Republicans might look to Trump for inspiration. On the stump he's been lavishing praise on the dictatorships in Hungary, China, Russia and North Korea. His followers have at least four solid options for expatriation if President Biden wins reelection.

But, of course, actually leaving isn't easy. The hitch in moving to Canada may be bureaucracy. But the hitch in moving to the autocracies that are richest in Trumpian values is that they also tend to be hostile to immigrants.

Tinian *Tasi Yan Langit 'Sonneta'*

LITERARY NOOK

BY BOB COLDEEN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing

My "sonneta" is written in sonata form: Exposition, Development, Recapitulation, and Coda. *Tasi* means ocean, *langit* is sky.

EXPOSITION:

"The sea can do craziness, it can do smooth,
…and so no doubt can you and you."
—Mary Oliver (1935 - 2019)

DEVELOPMENT:

The Tinian Sea can be *todu kaduku*, crazy
yan lokkue tosta, low tide quiet and smooth
after weeks of calm it sometimes seems lazy
then it quickly becomes rough and uncouth.

Spitting sand and seaweed up on the shore
as it has done for countless centuries before
fish get caught in throw nets near the beach
some escape and swim quickly out of reach.

We too can be crazy, lazy, calm, and quiet
disrespectful, dishonest, rude, and uncouth
manifest gluttonous habits, need for a diet
in life's ups and downs, old age back to youth.

As we live and love next to the Philippine Sea
the ocean can be rough and calm and so can we.

RECAPITULATION:

Home seems so far away so sad am I
the channel is wide I cannot get across
the ocean waves crash, break and toss
I'm longing to look up at stars in the sky.

CODA:

I look for steamy looking distant stars down
near the Scorpio constellation's tail
coming out of the Teakettle constellation's
spout with hope my eyes don't fail.

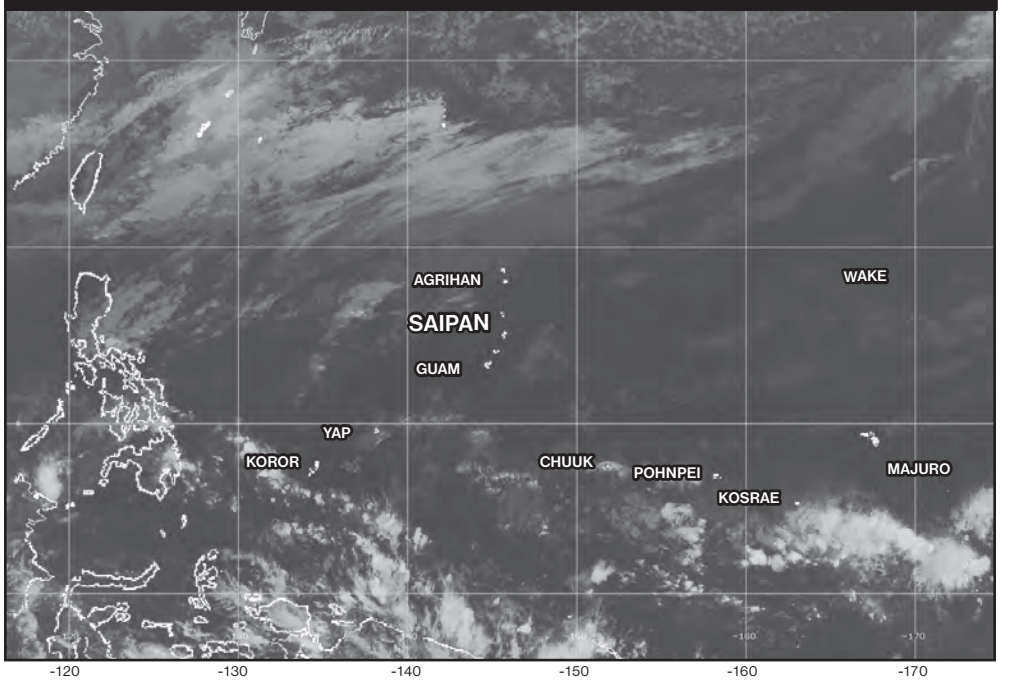
N.B. The Milky Way galaxy can be seen with the naked eye between the tail of the Scorpio constellation and the spout of the Teakettle constellation. The galaxy looks like steam that is coming out of the spout.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
86 / 78°	87 / 78°	87 / 78°	87 / 78°	87 / 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:07 AM TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Partly cloudy skies can be observed from satellite imagery. Combined seas are 6 to 9 feet for the region (more on this in the marine section). The trade winds are currently gentle over the Marianas.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Sunny	84° / 77°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 77°
Yap	Sunny	84° / 78°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	84° / 80°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	84° / 78°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°
Majuro	Sunny	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:45 AM	6:02 PM
Thursday	6:45 AM	6:03 PM
Friday	6:46 AM	6:03 PM
Saturday	6:46 AM	6:04 PM
Sunday	6:46 AM	6:05 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:18 AM	4:39 PM	-
Thursday	6:22 AM	5:44 PM	-
Friday	7:22 AM	6:51 PM	-
Saturday	8:18 AM	7:57 PM	-
Sunday	9:07 AM	8:59 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Fair	78° / 67°
Beijing	Fair	37° / 24°
Hong Kong	Fair	70° / 62°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 70°
London	Snow Showers	37° / 27°
Los Angeles	Clear	61° / 41°
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 78°
Melbourne	Sunny	77° / 57°
Miami	Cloudy/Wind	74° / 63°
New York	Clear	46° / 36°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	50° / 34°
Paris	Cloudy	32° / 30°
Busan	Cloudy	42° / 26°
Rome	Showers	50° / 41°
Salem	Cloudy	48° / 34°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	57° / 44°
Seoul	Snow	31° / 24°
Tokyo	Sunny	49° / 36°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	48° / 38°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:33 AM	Low Tide	-0.64
8:05 AM	High Tide	1.69
12:59 PM	Low Tide	1.21
5:41 PM	High Tide	1.74

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

IRS announces Jan. 29 as start of 2024 tax season

WASHINGTON (AP)—The IRS on Monday announced January 29 as the official start date of the 2024 tax season, and expects more than 128.7 million tax returns to be filed by the April 15 tax deadline.

The announcement comes as the agency undergoes a massive overhaul, attempting to improve its technology and customer service processes with tens of billions of dollars allocated to the agency through Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act, signed into law in August 2022.

"As our transformation efforts take hold, taxpayers will continue to see marked improvement in IRS operations in the upcoming filing season," said IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel in a news release. "IRS employees are working hard to make sure that new funding is used to help taxpayers by making the process of preparing and filing taxes easier."

AP

A sign outside the Internal Revenue Service building is seen, May 4, 2021, in Washington. The IRS has announced Jan. 29 as the official start date of the 2024 tax season, and expects more than 128.7 million tax returns to be filed by the April 15 tax deadline.

Agency leadership says this year more walk-in centers will be open to help taxpayers, enhanced paperless processing will help with IRS correspondence and enhanced individual online accounts will be available for taxpayers.

Additionally, eligible taxpayers will be able to file their 2023 returns online directly with the IRS through a new, electronic direct file pilot. The IRS says it will be rolled out in phases and is expected to be widely available in mid-March.

The IRS expects most refunds to be issued in less than 21 days.

In previous years, the IRS was slammed with massive backlogs of paper tax returns. In June-2022, the IRS faced more than 21 million backlogged paper tax returns, with National Taxpayer Advocate Erin Collins stating at the time: "The math is daunting."

Now, with increased funding the IRS expects a smoother filing season with less backlogs, but now it is seeing persistent threats of funding cuts.

Last year's debt ceiling and budget cuts deal between Republicans and the White House r esulted in $1.4 billion rescinded from the agency's original $80 billion allocation through the Inflation Reduction Act, and a separate agreement to take $20 billion from the IRS over the next two years and divert those funds to other nondefense programs.

Alaska Airlines' decision not to ground Boeing jet despite warning signs comes under NTSB scrutiny

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—The decision by Alaska Airlines to stop flying one of its planes over the Pacific Ocean to Hawaii due to warnings from a cabin-pressurization system—yet keep flying it over land—is raising questions about whether the jet should have been in the air at all.

The nation's top accident investigator says warning lights were triggered on three flights, including each of the two days before the brand-new Boeing 737 Max 9 suffered a terrifying fuselage blowout Friday night. A plug covering a spot left for an emergency door tore off the plane as it flew 16,000 feet (4,800 meters) above Oregon.

Jennifer Homendy, chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, said maintenance crews checked the plane and cleared it to fly—but the airline decided not to use it for the long route to Hawaii over water so that it "could return very quickly to an airport" if the warning light reappeared.

Friday's flight was headed from Oregon to Southern California, and made it back to Portland without serious injury to any of the 171 passengers and six crew members. But the decision to allow it to fly over land in the first place struck some aviation experts as illogical.

"If you are afraid to take the airplane far from land, what is the reason for that? That has to be answered by Alaska Airlines," said Steven Wallace, an air-safety consultant and commercial pilot who once headed accident investigations for the Federal Aviation Administration.

The FAA grounded all Max 9s operated by Alaska and United and some flown by foreign airlines for inspection after the Friday night flight. The inspections are focused on plugs used to seal an area set aside for extra emergency doors that are not required on United and Alaska Max 9s.

Monday afternoon, United Airlines said it found loose bolts and other "installation issues" on door plugs that were inspected after the Alaska Airlines incident.

"Since we began preliminary inspections on Saturday, we have found instances that appear to relate to installation issues in the door plug—for example, bolts that needed additional tightening," Chicago-based United said.

Boeing, which has had its own share of problems with various planes over the years, pledged to "help address any and all findings" that airlines make during their inspections.

The FAA declined to comment on whether the Alaska Airlines plane in question should have been allowed to keep flying. The agency said "it would be premature" to comment while the NTSB is investigating the Friday night flight.

Seattle-based Alaska Airlines also declined to comment, saying it would need permission from the NTSB to discuss the plane and its maintenance history. "We will provide information as soon as the NTSB permits us to do so," the airline said.

Alan Diehl, a former crash investigator for both the NTSB and the Federal Aviation Administration, said Alaska should have grounded the plane, period. However, he and other critics said the decision to stop flying the plane to Hawaii might have averted a disaster.

If the blowout had happened halfway to Hawaii, pilots would have been forced to fly low enough so passengers could breathe without oxygen masks, which burns more fuel. And the gaping hole in the fuselage would create drag. The plane might have run out of fuel before reaching land, experts said.

"As far as I'm concerned, there's an angel in Alaska," Diehl said. "Whoever made the decision to do that probably saved a lot of lives."

Other aviation insiders saw nothing unusual in the airline's decision to limit but not ground the plane after the pressurization warnings on flights Dec. 7, Jan 3 and Jan. 4—the day before the blowout.

Yellen says 100K firms joined business database that's aimed at unmasking shell company owners

VIENNA, Va. (AP)—Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen announced that 100,000 businesses have joined a new database that collects "beneficial ownership" information on firms as part of a new government effort to unmask shell company owners.

Yellen said in remarks Monday that the new Treasury database that is collecting beneficial ownership information sends the message that "the United States is not a haven for dirty money."

Yellen visited Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network—known as FinCEN—in Vienna, Virginia to discuss the launch of the database with the new year. She also spoke about upcoming real estate rules meant to increase transparency about the people and companies buying up property in the U.S.

The Virginia visit is meant to showcase the Biden administration's intent to increase corporate transparency and prevent the misuse of shell companies.

"Around the world, lack of transparency, specifically due to opaque corporate structures, makes it easier to conceal illicit activity," Yellen said during her visit to FinCEN headquarters. "Information on beneficial ownership will support our law enforcement colleagues in making arrests, prosecuting offenders, and seizing ill-gotten assets."

In 2021, the bipartisan Corporate Transparency Act was signed into law, giving Treasury the authority to write new rules on beneficial ownership. And as of Jan. 1, most U.S. firms must report identifying information about who directly or indirectly owns or controls them.

The rule requires most American businesses with fewer than 20 employees—roughly 32.6 million companies—to register with the government.

In November 2022, the National Small Business Association sued Treasury over the database and argued that the new reporting rule violates the U.S. Constitution, saying it is unduly burdensome on small firms, violates privacy and free speech protections and infringes on states' powers to govern businesses.

A judge is expected to decide on the matter imminently.

Along with the business database, Yellen said Treasury is considering additional steps to address risks associated with commercial real estate.

Real estate is a commonly used vehicle for money laundering. Yellen said in March 2023 that illicit actors laundered at least $2.3 billion through U.S. real estate between 2015 and 2020.

A 2022 Congressional Research Service report suggested that Congress could consider how to balance money-laundering risks in the real estate sector against differing views on oversight.

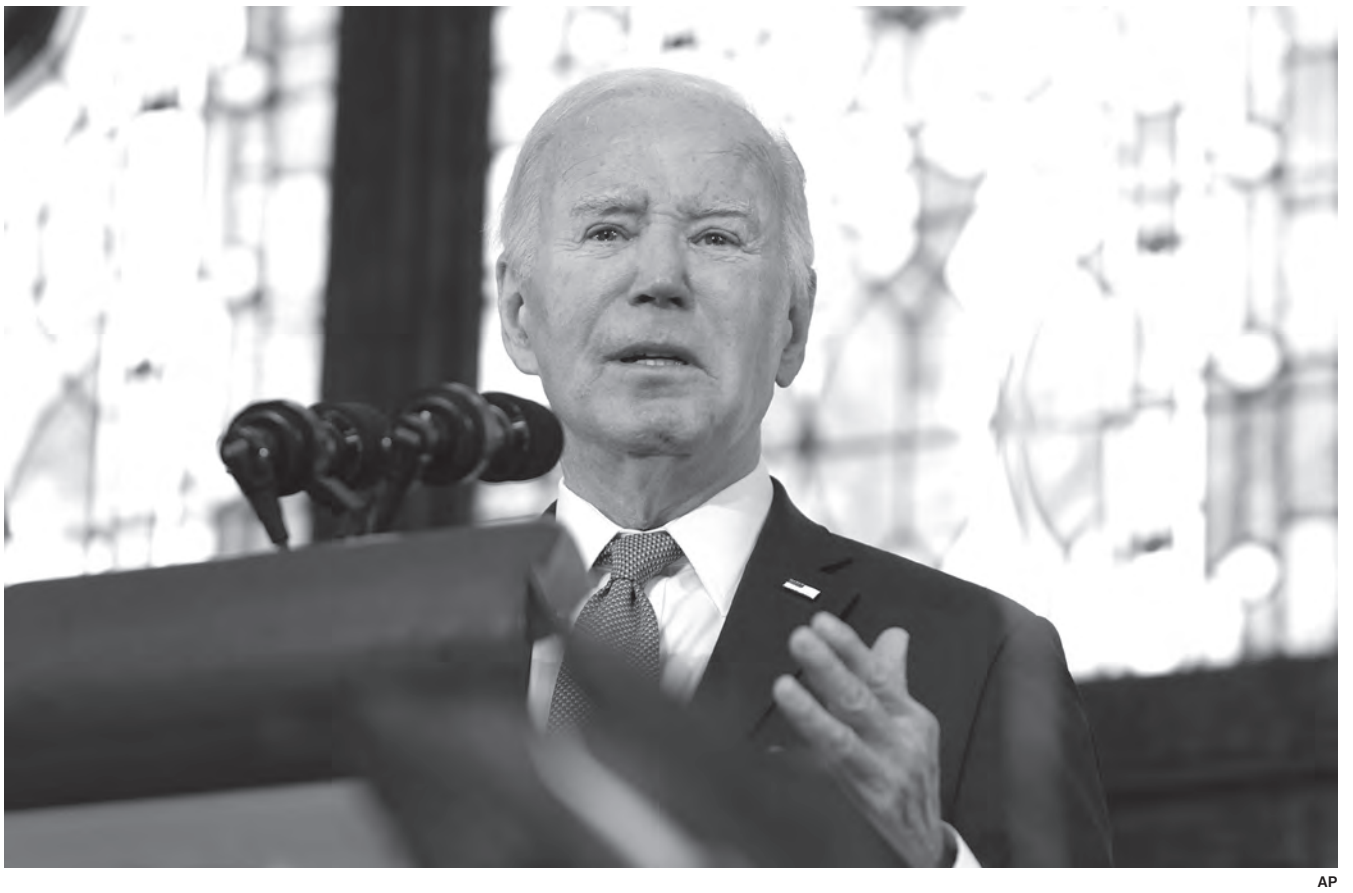
"The benefits of increasing corporate transparency through gathering beneficial ownership information—put simply, knowing who owns what—start with protecting our national security," Yellen said. "Corporate transparency can bring economic benefits as well: protecting our financial system, reducing due diligence costs, enabling fair business competition, and increasing tax revenue."

FinCEN's mission is to safeguard the financial system from criminal abuse, money laundering and other illicit activity, according to its website.

Nation

Biden condemns white supremacy in campaign speech

» In church where Black people were killed



AP

President Joe Biden delivers remarks at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C., Monday, Jan. 8, 2024, where nine worshippers were killed in a mass shooting by a white supremacist in 2015.

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP)—Courting Black voters he needs to win reelection, President Joe Biden on Monday denounced the "poison" of white supremacy in America, declaring at the site of a deadly racist church shooting in South Carolina that such ideology has no place in America, "not today, tomorrow or ever."

Biden spoke from the pulpit of Mother Emanuel AME Church, where in 2015 nine Black parishioners were shot to death by the white stranger they had invited to join their Bible study. The Democratic president's speech followed his blunt remarks last Friday on the eve of the anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, in which he excoriated former President Donald Trump for "glorifying" rather than condemning political violence.

At Mother Emanuel, Biden said "the word of God was pierced by bullets of hate, of rage, propelled not just by gunpowder, but by a poison, a poison that has for too long haunted this nation."

That's "white supremacy," he said, the view by some whites that they are superior to other races. "It is a poison, throughout our history, that's ripped this nation apart. This has no place in America. Not today, tomorrow or ever."

It was a grim way to kick off a presidential campaign, particularly for someone known for his unfailing optimism and belief that American achievements are limitless. But it's a reflection of the emphasis Biden and his campaign are placing on energizing Black voters amid deepening concerns among Democrats that the president could lose support from this critical constituency heading into the election.

Biden's campaign advisers and aides hope the visit lays out the stakes of the race in unequivocal terms three years after the cultural saturation of Trump's words and actions while he was president. It's a contrast they hope will be paramount to voters in 2024.

Biden also used his second major campaign event of the year to thank the state's Black voters. After an endorsement by Democratic Rep. Jim Clyburn, one of the highest-ranking African Americans in the U.S. House, the state made Biden the winner of its Democratic presidential primary in 2020. That, in turn, set him on a path to become the party's nominee and defeat Trump to win the presidency.

White House and Pentagon will review Defense chief Austin's lack of disclosure on hospital stay

WASHINGTON (AP)—Both the White House and Pentagon said Monday they would look into why President Joe Biden and other top officials weren't informed for days that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had been hospitalized. A Pentagon spokesman pointed to one reason: A key staffer was out sick with the flu.

Even as the Biden administration pledged to look into what rules or procedures weren't followed, it maintained its silence about why Austin has been hospitalized for a week. Late Monday, the Pentagon issued an update saying Austin "is recovering well."

Some Republicans have demanded Austin's resignation, but the Pentagon said he has no plans to step down.

Austin, 70, went to the hospital on Dec. 22 for what the Pentagon press secretary called an "elective procedure" but one serious enough that Austin temporarily transferred some of his authorities to his deputy, without telling her or other U.S. leaders why. He went home the following day.

He also transferred some of his authorities to Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks after experiencing severe pain and being taken back to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center by ambulance and put into intensive care on Jan. 1. The White House was not informed he was in the hospital until Jan. 4.

Austin, who resumed his duties on Jan. 5, is no longer in intensive care. Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary, said his prognosis is "good" but it is not known when he will be released.

The Pentagon said Austin has continued to receive briefings and make calls to senior leaders. On Monday, he spoke to national security adviser Jake Sullivan and got briefings from Hicks; Gen. Erik Kurilla, his top general in the Middle East; and the Joint Chiefs chairman, Gen. CQ Brown Jr.

The failure to properly inform government and defense leaders will be the subject of what John Kirby, the National Security Council spokesman, called a "hotwash" to see if procedures need to be changed.

Kirby, speaking to reporters on Air Force One as Biden traveled to South Carolina, said there is an "expectation" among members of Biden's Cabinet that if one of them is hospitalized, "that will be notified up the chain of command."

Monday night the Pentagon announced in a memo it would review how authorities are transferred and specifically focus on the events and decisions surrounding Austin's hospitalization, to ensure that in the future, "proper and timely notification has been made to the President and White House and, as appropriate, the United States Congress and the American public."

The late Monday memo also vastly expands the circle of people who will be notified in future transfers of authority. During the week of Austin's hospitalization, Hicks and her staff received the transfer of authority notification through email, but it was limited to them and without explanation.

Going forward, any time authority is transferred a wider swath of officials will also be notified, to include the Pentagon's general counsel, the chairman and vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commanders, service secretaries, the service chiefs of staff, the White House Situation Room, and the senior staff of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense.

On Monday, Ryder acknowledged that he and other public affairs and defense aides were told Jan. 2 that Austin had been hospitalized but did not make it public and did not tell the military service leaders or the National Security Council until Jan. 4.

"I want to offer my apologies and my pledge to learn from this experience, and I will do everything I can to meet the standard that you expect from us," he said.

Ryder said staff in Austin's front office will review notification procedures, including whether regulations, rules or laws were broken, and will take steps to improve the notification process. Those staff members, however, are among those who did not disclose the secretary's hospitalization.

'King of the NRA': Civil trial scrutinizes lavish spending by gun rights group's longtime leader

NEW YORK (AP)—The longtime head of National Rifle Association operated as the "King of the NRA," spending lavishly on himself, punishing dissent and showering allies with country club memberships and no-show contracts, a lawyer for the New York attorney general's office told jurors Monday.

Wayne LaPierre's methods as the NRA's executive vice president and chief executive officer allowed him to operate the powerful gun rights organization "as Wayne's World for decades," Assistant Attorney General Monica Connell argued in an opening statement in a civil trial scrutinizing his leadership and spending at the nonprofit.

LaPierre, who said Friday he is leaving the NRA after leading it since 1991, watched stoically from a seat along a courtroom wall as six jurors and six alternates were seated for the trial, which is expected to take six weeks. He moved to the front of the gallery as Connell spoke, her argument augmented by a slideshow showing the NRA's leadership structure and expenses at issue in the case.

Connell said LaPierre charged the organization more than $11 million for private jet flights over the years and authorized $135 million in NRA contracts for a vendor whose owners provided him repeated access to a 108-foot (33-meter) yacht and free trips to the Bahamas, Greece, Dubai and India.

At the same time, LaPierre, 74, consolidated power and avoided scrutiny by hiring unqualified underlings who looked the other way, routing expenses through a vendor, doctoring invoices, and retaliating against board members and executives who questioned his spending, Connell said.

In one example, Connell said, the NRA's former chief financial officer, Craig Spray, found himself unable to log into the organization's computer system after he objected to LaPierre's way of doing business. In a November 2020 email to organization brass, Spray took issue with the boss' authoritarian rule, writing: "There are no 'Wayne said' approvals at the NRA."

LaPierre kept quiet about gifts he received from vendors until the morning he testified in the NRA's failed bankruptcy in Texas in 2021, Connell said. For years before that, she said, he'd been checking "no" on an internal disclosure form that asked if he'd received any gifts worth more than $300.

LaPierre's actions and that of the "entrenched leadership" that enabled his alleged behavior "breached the trust" of the organization's five million members, Connell said. Their conduct violated laws governing nonprofit charities and the organization's internal policies governing travel, expenses, conflicts of interest and whistleblower protections, she said.

"They acted illegally over and over again for years," Connell told jurors.

New York Attorney General Letitia James sued the NRA, LaPierre and three current or former executives in 2020, alleging they cost the organization tens of millions of dollars from questionable expenditures. In recent years, though, the organization has been beset by financial troubles, dwindling membership and infighting.

LaPierre is accused of setting himself up with a $17 million contract with the NRA if he were to exit the organization, and spending NRA money on travel consultants, luxury car services and five-star travel.

World

Israeli strike kills elite Hezbollah commander

BEIRUT (AP)—An Israeli airstrike killed an elite Hezbollah commander Monday in southern Lebanon, the latest in an escalating exchange of strikes across the border that have raised fears of another Mideast war even as the fighting in Gaza exacts a mounting toll on civilians.

The strike on an SUV killed a commander in a secretive Hezbollah unit that operates along the border, according to a Lebanese security official who spoke on condition of anonymity in keeping with regulations. The commander, Wissam al-Tawil, was a veteran of the Iranian-backed Lebanese force who took part in the 2006 cross-border kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers that triggered the last war between Israel and Hezbollah, an official in the group said.

He is the most senior Hezbollah militant killed since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel triggered all-out war in Gaza and lower-intensity fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, which has escalated since an Israeli strike killed a senior Hamas leader last week in Beirut.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is back in the region this week, appears to be trying to head off a wider conflict.

In other developments, Israel said it has largely wrapped up major operations in northern Gaza, though fighting and bombardment there continue. Israeli forces are now focusing on the central region and the southern city of Khan Younis, where thousands more Palestinians fled.

Israeli officials say the fighting will continue for many more months as the army seeks to dismantle Hamas and return scores of hostages taken during the militants' Oct. 7 attack.

The offensive has already killed over 23,000 Palestinians, devastated vast swaths of the Gaza Strip, displaced nearly 85% of its population of 2.3 million and left a quarter of its residents facing starvation.

'SICKENING SCENES' IN GAZA'S OVERWHELMED HOSPITALS

Medics, patients and displaced people fled from central Gaza's main hospital as fighting drew closer, witnesses said Monday. Losing the facility would be another major blow to a health system shattered by three months of war.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Hong Kongers in Taiwan firmly support ruling party after watching China erode freedoms at home

HONG KONG (AP)—As Taiwan's presidential election approaches, many immigrants from Hong Kong, witnesses to the alarming erosion of civil liberties at home, are supporting the ruling Democratic Progressive Party. Beijing's crackdown on dissent in the financial hub has cemented their preference for a party committed to preserving Taiwan's de facto independence and democratic values ahead of the Jan. 13 vote. While Taiwanese immigration policies have been less welcoming than some from Hong Kong anticipated, most remain steadfast in their support for the DPP, largely due to the party's firm stance on autonomy from Beijing, according to interviews with 10 Hong Kongers, over half of whom moved to Taiwan after the 2019 anti-government protests. Hong Tsun-ming, a protester who feared arrest and moved to Taiwan in 2019, told The Associated Press he looks forward to having a taste of deciding its fate. The election is a cherished voting opportunity he never had in Hong Kong, where the chief executive is picked by a predominantly pro-Beijing committee. He plans to support the DPP. Hong has thrown himself into local politics, committed to sharing lessons from Hong Kong. "It's to remind Taiwan not to follow the old path of Hong Kong," said Hong, member of the pro-independence Taiwan Statebuilding Party, which did not field candidates in the presidential race.

US, UK say Bangladesh's elections extending Hasina's rule were not credible

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—The United States and the United Kingdom said the elections that extended Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's rule were not credible, free and fair. Both countries, which have trade and development ties with Bangladesh, also condemned political violence that preceded Sunday's election in which Hasina's party won more than two-thirds of the parliamentary seats while turnout was low and the main opposition party boycotted. "The United States remains concerned by the arrests of thousands of political opposition members and by reports of irregularities on elections day. The United States shares the view with other observers that these elections were not free or fair and we regret that not all parties participated," State Department spokesperson Mathew Miller said from Washington. He urged Bangladesh's government to credibly investigate reports of violence and hold those responsible accountable. The U.K. said the democratic standards were not met consistently in the lead-up to the election. "Democratic elections depend on credible, open, and fair competition. Respect for human rights, rule of law and due process are essential elements of the democratic process.

N. Korea's Kim turns 40, but there are no public celebrations of his birthday

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un turned 40 on Monday with no announced public celebrations at home, after he entered the new year with artillery barrages into the sea and vows to expand his nuclear arsenal. Since taking power in late 2011, Kim, the third generation of his family to rule North Korea, is believed to have established an absolute leadership similar to his predecessors. But his birthday has yet to be officially celebrated, unlike his late father Kim Jong Il and grandfather Kim Il Sung. Their birthdays are two of the North's biggest holidays and are marked with great fanfare, loyalty campaigns and sometimes massive military parades. On Monday, North Korea's state news agency published a lengthy article extolling Kim's guidance of major construction projects in the past decade. It also reported Kim visited a chicken farm with his daughter the previous day. But it made no mention of his birthday. Some observers speculate Kim may think he's still relatively too young or needs bigger achievements to hold such lavish birthday festivities.

IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE

+Felicidad "Daling" Taman Ogumoro

SEPTEMBER 01, 1949 - JANUARY 03, 2024

She now joins her:

Husband: +Francisco "Cisco" Thomas Uludong
Parents: +Daniel Rogolifoi Ogumoro & +Estefania Taman Ogumoro
Brother & Sister-In-law: +Joseph Taman Ogumoro & +Doris Taisakan Ogumoro
Sisters: +Francisca Taman Ogumoro & +Martina Ogumoro Barcinas
Parents-In-law: +Uludong Mereb & +Llall Basiou Isebong
+Temengil Ambrosio & +Urriik Ngirairikl

Her memories will live in the hearts of her:

CHILDREN

Aschumar Kodep (Peter Schuubwe Ogumoro-Fitial, godson)
Alingmar Basiou/Reneacia SN. (Ulusmar Joaquin, Amaya Joy Leiwascheng, Anabelle Jeanne, Alingmar Jr.)
Lescheweisei Llall/Peter P. Aldan (Daeus Aldan Salas, godson)
Leimalyal Urriik/Kelvin M. Cepeda (Kelvin Jr., Luna Liyelmaram)

PALAUAN DAUGHTERS

Stacy Uludong Ngiralmau (Graydon Archer)
dilJune E./Maui Ngiraswei (Keen Rechesengel Sakuma, Ebiklou Mau'hina, Mariur Moses)

SIBLINGS

+Francisca T. Ogumoro
Merced T. Ogumoro & family
+Martina O./Donald C. Barcinas & family
+Joseph T. Ogumoro/+Doris T. Ogumoro & family
Joaquin T. Ogumoro/Lauri B. Ogumoro & family
Laura T. Ogumoro/John M. Tagabuel & family
Therese T. Ogumoro & family
Paul T. Ogumoro/Shirley P. Camacho-Ogumoro & family
Carmilynn T. Ogumoro/James M. Kintol & family

REARED NIECES

Cecil Pamela P. Kileleman & family
Becky Dania K. Mettao/Davenalt Jones & family
Laurese K. Mettao

IN-LAWS

Hilaria Anemary/Joseph Keola & family
+Antonia/+Sylvester Alonz & family
Moses/Lily Uludong & family
+Kaleb/Geggie Udui & family
+Hiroshi/Basilisa Tarkong & family
+Edobo Temengil/+Isabella Sumang & family
+Masami/+Valeria Temengil & family
Masae/+Cpt. John Kintaro & family
Johanes/Dirruchei Temengil & family
+Sekang/Temmy Shmull & family
Philomena Temengil & family
Baklai/Joe Chilton & family

*On **Saturday, January 13, 2024**, our +Beloved will be with us for the last time, beginning at 7:30AM at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral.*
RESPONSO, FOLLOWED BY PUBLIC VIEWING & LAST RESPECTS WILL TAKE PLACE FROM 8:00AM - 9:30AM.
Mass of Christian Burial will begin at 11:00AM, followed by Rite of Committal where she will be laid to rest at the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Thank you for your love, prayers and kind expressions of support.

Her Children & Siblings

Good Housekeeping

THE LIBERATING POWER OF UNCLUTTERING

Clearing the path to a balanced life

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
An effective way to start this new year is through the transformative practice of decluttering.

By ROSEMARIE EMBILE
Special to the Saipan Tribune

The new year is an excellent opportunity to reflect on the past and set intentions for the future. Welcoming 2024 with open arms encourages us to think about how to make the coming year a time of growth, fulfillment, and positive change. One effective way to start this journey is through the transformative practice of decluttering. Just as individuals commonly engage in uncluttering their living spaces during this time, clearing away physical and mental clutter can create a harmonious environment that fosters personal development and well-being.

Here are five ways decluttering can help you make the most of the new year:

1 Letting Go of the Past

As we prepare to embrace the new year, it's essential to take some time to declutter and rid ourselves of things that no longer serve us. This could include physical possessions that are taking up space and causing clutter, habits that are no longer beneficial or productive, or emotional baggage that we've been carrying for far too long. By releasing these things from our lives, we make room for new opportunities and experiences. We create space for growth and change, and we enable ourselves to move forward with a sense of clarity and purpose.

2 Setting Clear Intentions

As we approach a new year, it's common to feel the need to set resolutions or goals. However, doing so can often be overwhelming, particularly when we need clarity on what we want to achieve. It can be helpful to take a step back and declutter our aspirations to gain better clarity. This means reflecting on our values, priorities, and what we want to achieve in the long term.

Once we better understand what matters most, we can simplify our objectives. This involves breaking down our goals into smaller, more manageable steps and focusing on the essentials. Doing so ensures that our energy is directed toward meaningful pursuits rather than getting bogged down in details. By decluttering our aspirations and simplifying our objectives, we can ensure that we are directing our energy toward meaningful pursuits, increasing our chances of success, and ultimately leading to happier, more fulfilling lives.

3 Creating a Fresh Start

Clearing out your living space, work area, and digital devices can offer a new beginning for the coming year. A well-organized and clean space can provide an atmosphere of tranquility and positivity. Scientific studies have shown that a cluttered and disorganized environment can cause stress, anxiety, and even depression. A tidy and organized space can have the opposite effect, promoting calmness and reducing stress levels. Moreover, decluttering your surroundings can symbolize a more profound commitment to living more intentionally and purposefully. By simplifying your surroundings, you can free up time, energy, and mental space to focus on what truly matters to you.

4 Embracing Mindful Living

Try meditation, mindfulness, or journaling to start the year with a clear and focused mindset. These habits can help you declutter your mind and allow for more profound thoughts, insights, and emotions.

Meditation cultivates awareness and concentration while reducing stress and anxiety.

Mindfulness helps you stay present in the moment without judgment or distraction.

Journaling lets you explore your inner world, clarify your goals and values, and develop insights and solutions to your problems.

Incorporating these practices into your daily routine can create a more meaningful and fulfilling life, cultivate a deeper connection with yourself and others, and help you better understand your thoughts and emotions.

5 Cultivating a Balanced Life

Reevaluating your priorities and commitments can help you create a more balanced life. Consider what brings you joy and fulfillment, and intentionally allocate time for these activities. This approach ensures the new year is filled with meaningful experiences and personal growth.

Welcoming 2024 with a commitment to uncluttering is a holistic approach to shaping a life that aligns with your values and aspirations. As we begin on this journey of simplification, may the coming year be a time of renewal, growth, and the discovery of the abundant possibilities in a clutter-free and intentional life. Cheers to a fresh start and a meaningful year ahead!

Grow tasty, nutritious greens indoors

By MELINDA MYERS
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Boost the flavor and nutritional value of winter meals by growing a container of greens indoors.

Green leafy vegetables are healthy sources of carbohydrates, typically rich in fiber and nutrients, while also being low in fat and calories. Many of these vegetables can help reduce the risk of stroke, anemia, high blood pressure, certain cancers and diabetes. They also help improve the health of your gut, heart, bone and skin while boosting your body's immunity.

To create your own indoor garden of greens, all you need are seeds, a container, potting mix and a sunny window or artificial lights. Select a container or planter with drainage holes or reduce maintenance with the help of self-watering containers. Their water reservoirs reduce watering frequency.

Fill the container with a quality potting mix that is well-drained and retains moisture. Plant seeds as recommended on the seed packet. You can grow each type of green in its own container or mix them up for an attractive display in larger planters.

Water thoroughly and often enough to keep the soil moist while waiting for the seeds to sprout. Reduce the need for frequent watering by covering newly planted containers with a plastic sheet or dome. Once sprouts appear, remove the plastic and begin watering thoroughly when the top inch of soil begins to dry.

Boost productivity and increase planting space with the help of artificial lights. You will find a variety of setups for any space in your home. Counter and tabletop light stands can be conveniently located in the kitchen or dining room. Stand-alone light shelves provide more growing space within a small footprint. Furniture-grade light stands make them easy to use in any room in the house.

Grow greens you and your family like to use in your favorite recipes and salads. Green or red leaf lettuce is easy to grow indoors and its mild flavor is most appealing to children and picky eaters.

DREAMSTIME/TNS
To create your own indoor garden of greens, all you need are seeds, a container, potting mix and a sunny window or artificial lights.

Spinach is another popular and easy-to-grow leafy green used fresh in salads and smoothies or added to soups and sauces. It contains many vitamins and nutrients, including iron, folic acid and calcium.

Kale is considered a superfood. This nutrient-dense vegetable is packed with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. If the flavor is a bit too intense for you, try the baby leaf types or braise for a milder flavor.

Add a bit of peppery flavor to salads, soups, pastas and other dishes with arugula. Add a spicier flavor with mustard greens. Sauté mustard greens or add them to your favorite Southern, Asian, Indian or savory dish.

Include color and flavor in your winter meals with beet greens. The leafy part of this vegetable is often overlooked but is the most nutritious part of the plant. Use these the same way you would spinach or kale.

Make it more fun by getting others involved. Hand family members and guests a plate and kitchen shears so they can harvest and help prepare the meal.

Life & Style

Lisa Bonet files for divorce from Jason Momoa 18 years after they became a couple

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lisa Bonet has filed for divorce from Jason Momoa 18 years after the two actors became a couple.

The 56-year-old Bonet, whose legal name is Lilakoi Moon, filed documents to end her marriage to the 44-year-old Momoa in Los Angeles County court on Monday. The filing comes nearly two years after they announced their separation.

The petition cites irreconcilable differences as the reason for the split. The filing says neither person should get financial support and that the two have agreed on how to split their assets. The documents say they should have joint custody of their 16-year-old daughter and 15-year-old son.

AP

Jason Momoa, left, and Lisa Bonet, right, arrive at the premiere of "Aquaman" at TCL Chinese Theatre, Dec. 12, 2018, in Los Angeles.

Momoa is best known for his roles in the "Aquaman" movies and on "Game of Thrones." Bonet was a star of "The Cosby Show," its spinoff "A Different World," and the films "High Fidelity" and "Enemy of the State."

The two met and started dating in 2005, but did not legally marry until 2017. Their divorce documents gives their separation date as October 2020, more than a year before their announcement. It will be at least six months before a judge declares them divorced.

It was the first marriage for Momoa and the second for Bonet, who was previously married to musician Lenny Kravitz and has another daughter, actor Zoë Kravitz, with him.

Lily Gladstone is Globes' first Indigenous best actress winner

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—When Lily Gladstone took the stage Sunday night to accept her first Golden Globe, she spoke to the live TV audience in the Blackfeet language.

Gladstone

"This is a historic win," she said, becoming the Globes' first Indigenous winner of best actress in a drama. "This is for every little rez kid, every little urban kid, every little Native kid out there who has a dream, who is seeing themselves represented and our stories told—by ourselves, in our own words—with tremendous allies and tremendous trust from and with each other."

Gladstone, 37, won for her role as Mollie Burkhart in Martin Scorsese's epic "Killers of the Flower Moon." In the film, her character's family was murdered in a reign of terror in which the Osage were targeted for the headrights to their oil-rich land in Oklahoma.

In the audience, co-star Leonardo DiCaprio wore a pin in solidarity.

"I have my Osage pin on tonight because, you know, the Osage nation, we're standing in unison with them for this movie," he said before the show.

Gladstone and DiCaprio walked the red carpet with their respective mothers. After her win backstage, she paid homage to her parents for supporting her dreams.

The actor said her father watched from home, where they will have a "big ol' feast."

"Every time I've felt a level of guilt or it wasn't really possible, my mom and my dad my whole life never once questioned that this is what I was meant to do," said Gladstone, who is an only child. "They would always support me when it was the times of famine and the times of feast."

Golden Globes ratings rebound to 9.4M viewers, up from 2023 telecast

NEW YORK (AP)—Reviews have been poor for Sunday's 81st Golden Globes, but the telecast pulled in an average of 9.4 million viewers, up about 50% from last year, according to CBS.

The ceremony had the benefit of an NFL lead-in, as well as an especially starry gathering that drew Taylor Swift, Oprah Winfrey, Timothée Chalamet, Kylie Jenner, Leonardo DiCaprio and many more. The night's biggest winner, "Oppenheimer," was also a huge ticket-seller, with nearly $1 billion in box office.

But the broadcast hosted by comedian Jo Koy, was slammed by critics for a fumbled opening monologue and a rushed pace throughout that struggled to rekindle the "Hollywood's party of the year"-vibe that the Globes have long fostered.

But more viewers tuned in than they have since before the pandemic. Back in 2020, 18.4 million watched the Globes.

The ratings were a marked improvement over last year's Globes. That telecast, hosted by Jerrod Carmichael and aired on a Tuesday, attracted 6.3 million viewers, a new low for the ceremony on NBC. At their peak, the Globes often drew closer to 20 million viewers.

Idris Elba calls for tougher action on knife crime

LONDON (AP)—Actor Idris Elba on Monday urged the British government to ban machetes and serrated "zombie" knives to help stop young people falling victim to knife crime.

Elba

The London-born star of "The Wire" and "Luther" joined protesters from the "Don't Stop Your Future" campaign outside Parliament, posing with clothes and shoes representing people killed by knives.

In the U.K, which has strict gun-control laws, about four in 10 homicides involve a knife or sharp instrument. There is particular concern about knife crime involving young people in Britain's cities. In London, 21 teenagers were killed in 2023, 18 of whom were stabbed to death.

"I can't stay silent as more young lives are lost to these brutal and heartless crimes," Elba said. "As school returns, too many young people will not be joining their classmates and too many grieving families have lost a young person they love in recent years."

The government announced a ban on machetes and knives that are designed to look threatening in August 2023, but the law has yet to be approved by Parliament.

Elba also said technology companies should be held accountable for knife imagery on mobile phones.

"I can pick up a phone right now, type in knives and I'll get inundated with adverts for them," he said. "We should find a way to deter tech companies, advertising, to put that away."

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman, Max Blain, said knife crime and hospital admissions for stabbings had both fallen compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019-2020.

"But, still, we know knife crime devastates lives," he said. "We do want to do more. It's welcome that Idris Elba and others continue to shine a light on this important issue."

Opinions and beliefs put relatives at odds

DEAR ABBY: My grandmother and I have lived together for the past 22 years. She raised me from the age of 3. We used to be best friends. However, over the last few years, things have changed. We don't agree on a lot, and we have very different opinions on almost everything. We argue and fight with name-calling, threats and a lot of disrespect.

I have suggested we go to counseling a couple of times, but she's never shown any interest. I know I have an anger problem, which I take full responsibility for. I also know the best thing to do in these situations is probably to turn around and walk away, but sometimes she pushes my buttons and I can't help but fight back.

I understand this is a problem that needs to be fixed, and I want to, but I don't know how to start. I know you've written a booklet about anger. What can I do short of moving out?

OUT OF CONTROL IN COLORADO

DEAR OUT OF CONTROL: By admitting you have an anger problem, you have already taken a significant first step in dealing with it. You and your grandmother aren't the only people experiencing heightened emotions these days. We live in increasingly stressful times that have affected most of us in one way or another.

Because you are now an adult, the nature of your relationship with your grandmother may have changed. As adults, you are entitled to your own opinions. However, reasonable adults don't try to inflict their opinions on the people they love.

Recognizing what causes these flare-ups can help you avoid taking anger out on each other. It takes self-control and maturity to react calmly instead of exploding. Saying, "We both feel strongly about this. Can we discuss this another time?" and then going for a walk can help to maintain a calmer perspective.

My Anger Booklet contains many suggestions for managing and expressing anger appropriately in various situations. This is a skill that will prove increasingly important as you grow older. It can be ordered by sending your name and address, plus a check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to Dear Abby Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

We live in a time in our society when anger and divisiveness have reached new heights. As we have seen in the media, explosive anger is the most dangerous of all. Perhaps anger management should be taught in schools to help people more effectively communicate in a healthy manner.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating this girl for eight months. She tells me she and her ex-boyfriend remain good friends, and that he is her best friend. She sees him regularly and says she has gotten over him. I plan to marry her, but she wants to invite him to our wedding. The ex gives my girlfriend money. She says no sex is involved. Should I drop her over this?

ALARMED IN TEXAS

DEAR ALARMED: Probably, because accepting money from her ex-boyfriend indicates she is not independent of him.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

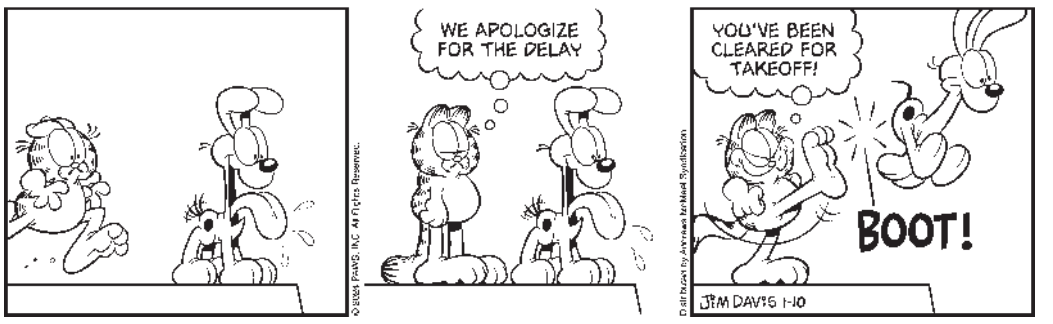
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HERE, YOU'LL PROBABLY WANT THIS PILLOW.
WHAT FOR?
IT'S LIKE AN AIR BAG. HOLD IT IN FRONT OF YOUR HEAD LIKE THIS AS WE GO DOWN.
DON'T YOU FEEL SAFER NOW?
I CERTAINLY DO.

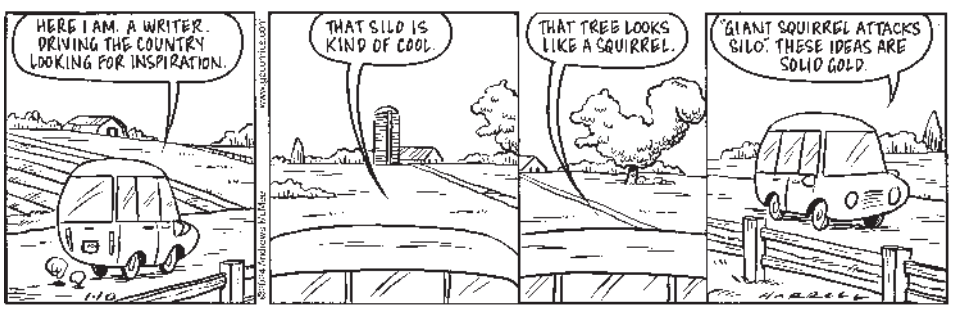
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


HERE I AM. A WRITER. DRIVING THE COUNTRY LOOKING FOR INSPIRATION.
THAT SILO IS KIND OF COOL.
THAT TREE LOOKS LIKE A SQUIRREL.
"GIANT SQUIRREL ATTACKS SILO." THESE IDEAS ARE SOLID GOLD.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

DID YOU KNOW DUNG BEETLES ARE ONE OF THE HARDEST-WORKING INSECTS?
AFTER AN ELEPHANT DOES HIS BUSINESS, A TEAM OF DUNG BEETLES QUICKLY RUSH IN AND GET TO WORK ROLLING THEIR 'PRIZE' AWAY.
IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU, I'D RATHER DRAW UNEMPLOYMENT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Edge
5 Garden area
8 "Les États- —"
12 Mine find
13 Ginger —
14 Ship-shape
15 Log-on need
17 PC picture
18 Road curves
19 Predica-ment
21 Research sites
24 Author Brown
25 Actress Liu
28 Church area
30 "The Joy Luck Club" author Tan
33 Equal (Pref.)
34 Sasha or Malia
35 Soviet space station
36 Pop
37 Andean land
38 Coop group
39 Compass dir.
41 Sicilian spouter
43 New York tribe
46 Egypt's Sadat
50 Serb or Croat
51 Label on a folder
54 Mara-thoner's stat
55 Shock partner
56 Battery fluid
57 Crystal gazer
58 Scepter
59 "Bonan-za" son

DOWN

1 A primary color
2 Historic flag maker
3 Mid-month date
4 Just
5 Sheep call
6 Shade tree
7 Profound
8 City near Syracuse
9 "Honest Abe" or "Old Hickory"
10 Teen fave
11 "Auld Lang —"
16 Intel-ligence org.
20 Concept
22 Innocent one
23 Extra
25 Cover
26 Olympics chant
27 Spy's moniker
29 Lewd material
31 Hr. fraction
32 Decade parts (Abbr.)
34 Oil cartel
38 "Splash" star Daryl
40 "Forget it!"
42 Dundee denial
43 Bygone fleet
44 Writer Wiesel
45 Miles away
47 Texas city
48 "Lucky Jim" author
49 Cincinnati team
52 — Jima
53 Went first

Solution time: 23 mins.

O	M	I	T	■	C	A	W	■	D	E	E	R
D	I	D	O	■	R	B	I	■	E	L	M	O
D	R	E	S	S	I	E	R	■	C	O	M	O
■	■	■	S	I	B	■	E	P	O	N	Y	M
R	A	C	F	D	■	A	H	O	Y	■	■	■
E	R	O	S	■	C	L	A	S	S	I	E	R
E	G	O	■	O	R	B	I	T	■	S	T	E
F	O	L	K	S	I	E	R	■	P	E	N	A
■	■	■	E	S	T	E	■	S	H	E	A	R
M	U	M	B	A	I	■	D	I	A	■	■	■
A	R	I	A	■	C	L	U	M	S	I	E	R
L	I	M	B	■	A	A	A	■	E	N	M	A
I	S	I	S	■	L	O	L	■	S	A	T	E

Yesterday's answer 1-10

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				16				■	17			
18					■	■	19	20				
■	■	■	21		22	23	■	24			■	■
25	26	27		■	28		29		■	30	31	32
33			■	34					■	35		
36			■	37				■	38			
■	■	39	40		■	41		42		■	■	■
43	44				45	■	■	46		47	48	49
50				■	51	52	53					
54					55				■	56		
57				■	58				■	59		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Evan Handler, 63; Pat Benatar, 71; George Foreman, 75; Rod Stewart, 79.

Happy Birthday: Set your sights on what you want to achieve this year, and don't stop until you are satisfied with the results. A lifestyle change is heading in your direction that will impact financial and professional outcomes. Take the path that lowers stress, feels comfortable and gives you time to spend with the ones you love. Your numbers are 6, 19, 22, 24, 32, 39, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Work behind the scenes, where you can get things done without interference. Avoid discussions that can lead to a no-win situation. Pay attention to your physical and financial well-being. Keep your thoughts to yourself and stick to the facts. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: A change will offer insight into what's available to you. Gather information and connect with someone who has something to contribute that you want. Use your acquired knowledge to advance into a better position. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: Get the low-down before you move. Someone will offer false information to encourage you to take a chance. Don't lower your guard or believe everything you hear. Research, get the facts and walk away from anything that offers potential risk. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: Consider what's available, then act. Be the one to set the wheels in motion and to justify why it's time; you are ready for a change. Embrace life, love and new beginnings with vigor. Live in the moment and share with someone special. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: Stay focused on your responsibilities. Take work seriously and do your part to ensure everything runs smoothly. You'll gain respect and an unexpected opportunity. Give a little extra, network and use your charm. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Participate in something challenging. Take an energetic approach to getting things done and learning all you can to ensure you reach your destination on time and with the maximum amount of proof and influence to get your way. Don't let anyone lead you astray. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: Proceed with caution. You'll face opposition if you try to force your ideas on others. Use your charm, but stick to the truth. Embellishing a situation will backfire, leaving you with debt or a product you can't use. Personal growth and self-improvement are favored. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Pay attention to detail, the cost involved and how diverse you can be with your offer. Don't hold back; use your imagination and transform your skills and knowledge into a prosperous pursuit. Change is within reach. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Use your time and space wisely. Look inward and figure out what you want to do next. Don't let others control your future. Figure out what you want, and don't be afraid to move forward alone. Think for yourself and put your energy into something gratifying. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: Concentrate on what's doable instead of looking for a quick fix. Practicality is your best bet when dealing with money, work and institutions. Take the path that leads to less stress and allows you the peace of mind to enjoy life. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Stay focused on what you can control and achieve. Be realistic and recognize what's doable and what will save you time and money. Put a schedule in place to accommodate your plans and to channel your energy into finishing what you start. ✪✪✪

PISCES (F*eb. 19-March 20)*: Keep an open mind, but don't believe bogus claims. Do the research, get the facts and make decisions to help you get ahead. Connect with people who can contribute to your life and goals, leading to exciting and profitable prospects. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are opportunity-driven, ambitious and quick. You are outgoing and helpful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

2	7	6	8			5		
		5						
8		4		1				7
6		1	3	5	4			
		8	1		2			4
	4		7					
		9	6		8		7	
3					1	9		8
4			9	7	5	1	3	

Difficulty: ★★★ 1/10

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

1	5	9	6	8	4	7	2	3
2	4	7	1	3	5	8	6	9
8	6	3	7	9	2	5	1	4
6	2	8	9	5	7	4	3	1
4	9	5	3	1	6	2	8	7
3	7	1	4	2	8	6	9	5
9	8	2	5	7	3	1	4	6
7	3	6	8	4	1	9	5	2
5	1	4	2	6	9	3	7	8

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Difficulty: ★★ 1/9

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

GONDOLA RIDES EVERYWHERE Solution: 6 letters

S	I	G	H	T	S	E	E	I	N	G	U	I	D	E
T	H	C	A	E	B	P	R	I	V	A	T	E	N	X
R	E	H	E	L	V	E	W	A	T	E	R	J	I	P
I	R	U	C	I	T	Y	K	A	E	P	O	V	A	E
P	U	R	N	A	W	S	G	R	B	Y	R	E	T	N
E	T	C	E	S	T	N	T	I	E	O	I	N	N	S
S	C	H	I	E	I	S	T	S	N	I	A	E	U	I
S	E	E	R	S	R	A	I	A	K	C	N	T	O	V
A	T	S	E	A	L	U	M	L	F	I	E	I	M	E
G	I	L	P	Y	O	A	T	A	T	L	P	A	I	U
E	H	E	X	L	Z	E	N	A	R	E	O	N	X	Q
V	C	E	E	E	Ⓚ	Ⓒ	Ⓞ	Ⓓ	N	O	K	A	A	O
S	R	K	V	I	E	W	O	R	R	A	N	C	T	R
A	A	D	R	I	A	T	I	C	S	E	A	A	U	A
L	A	N	A	C	D	N	A	R	G	N	A	L	P	B

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Adriatic Sea, Amaze, Architecture, Baroque, Beach, Boat, Bucket List, Churches, City, Dock, Enjoy, Expensive, Experience, Float, Grand Canal, Guide, Island, Italy, Lake Louise, Las Vegas, Mountain, Narrow, Nature, Oar, Open-air, Panorama, Peak, Plan, Private, Sail, Sightseeing, Sing, Ski, Sleek, Street, Stripes, Swan, Taxi, Venetian, View, Water

Yesterday's Answer: Backyard

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Pacers rally past Celtics after Haliburton injures hamstring

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Bennedict Mathurin scored 26 points, including the deciding free throws with 0.6 seconds remaining, and the Indiana Pacers rallied after All-Star point guard Tyrese Haliburton suffered a hamstring injury to beat the Boston Celtics 133-131 on Monday night.

Haliburton strained his left hamstring when he slipped and did the splits on a drive in the second quarter. He was carried to the locker room by two teammates. An MRI was scheduled for Tuesday.

"That was a very deflating moment," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. "(But) this was an important game. Every game that we play has the ability to be a season-defining game."

Mathurin was fouled by Kristaps Porzingis on a 3-pointer just before time expired. The call was reviewed and upheld. Mathurin sank the first two free throws and missed the third on purpose.

"I was excited," Mathurin said. "It was a pretty good thing to be a part of."

He finished 8 of 15 from the field, including five 3-pointers, as Indiana split a two-game home series against the top team in the Eastern Conference.

"Really amazing effort from our team," Carlisle said. "A lot of emotions in this game, for a lot of reasons: you're playing the best team in basketball and Tyrese's injury situation."

All-Star Jaylen Brown scored a season-high 40 points on 17-of-26 shooting for the Celtics, who were without leading scorer Jayson Tatum. The four-time All-Star sat out to manage a left ankle sprain. Tatum averages 27.5 points, and he had 38 points, 14 rebounds and six assists in Saturday's 118-101 win over the Pacers.

"He stepped up and didn't force anything," Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said of Brown. "He let the game come to him. He scored in many different ways."

AP

Indiana Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton (0) reacts after being injured during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Boston Celtics in Indianapolis, Monday, Jan. 8, 2024.

Jrue Holiday scored 21 points and Porzingis had 19 for Boston.

"We all played a relatively decent offensive game," Mazzulla said, "but we all have to be better on defense."

The Pacers trailed by nine points at halftime but finished with seven double-figure scorers. Aaron Nesmith scored 17 points, Myles Turner 16 and Buddy Hield 15.

Brown thought he was headed to the line for potential game-deciding free throws after officials whistled Hield for a foul with the game tied at 131 and 3.2 seconds remaining. But a review overturned the call and awarded possession to the Pacers.

BULLS 119, HORNETS 112, OT

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Coby White scored 27 points, Andre Drummond added 21 points and 15 rebounds and Chicago overcame a 39-point performance from Terry Rozier to beat Charlotte.

Nikola Vucevic added 21 points and nine rebounds in his second game back from an injury for the Bulls (17-21), who defeated the Hornets for the second time in four nights.

Rozier had seven 3-pointers and was 12-for-12 from the foul line for Charlotte (8-26), which has lost 13 of its last 14 games.

Miles Bridges added 24 points for the Hornets, who remain without three startes due to injuries.

CLIPPERS 138, SUNS 111

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Paul George scored 25 points, Ivica Zubac added 19 and Los Angeles beat Phoenix for the second time in five days.

James Harden had 19 points, seven rebounds and 10 assists for the Clippers, who won 131-122 in Phoenix last Wednesday and have won six of seven overall. Kawhi Leonard added 17 points.

Kevin Durant scored 20 of his 30 points in the first half for the Suns. Devin Booker finished with 20 points and Bradley Beal had 15 points.

THUNDER 136, WIZARDS 128

WASHINGTON (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 32 points, Chet Holmgren added 31 and Oklahoma City led most of the way in a victory over Washington.

Jalen Williams added 21 points and 10 assists for the Thunder (24-11), who avoided a third loss following defeats at Atlanta and Brooklyn to begin a four-game road trip.

Holmgren spearheaded that effort, making 11 of 14 shots and going 4 of 5 from beyond the arc.

Jordan Poole scored 24 points, and Kyle Kuzma added 22 points and grabbed 15 rebounds for Washington (6-30).

HEAT 120, ROCKETS 113

MIAMI (AP)—Tyler Herro scored 28 points, Bam Adebayo finished with 22 points and 12 rebounds, and Miami topped Houston.

Kevin Love scored 15 points for Miami (21-15), while Duncan Robinson and Jaime Jaquez Jr. each had 14 for the Heat. Josh Richardson finished with 12 for Miami. Adebayo had 10 of his points in the fourth quarter.

Fred VanVleet led all scorers with 32 points for the Rockets (18-17), who opened a six-game road trip. Alperen Sengun scored 22 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for Houston.

JAZZ 132, BUCKS 116

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Jordan Clarkson and Lauri Markkanen had 21 points apiece and Utah staved off a second-half rally for a victory Milwaukee.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 25 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists for the Bucks (25-12), who have lost four of five.

John Collins, Collin Sexton and Keyonte George each had 19 points for Utah (18-20), which has won five of its last six.

Milwaukee was without guard Damian Lillard, averaging 25.1 points per game, who was out for personal reasons. Khris Middleton added 23 points and Malik Beasley 17 for the Bucks.

The Bucks, who trailed 77-46 at the half, scored 44 points in the third quarter to pull within 100-90 entering the final period.

Ja Morant's season is over because of shoulder injury.

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Ja Morant's season is over, with the Memphis Grizzlies announcing Monday night that their star guard needs surgery to repair a tear in his right shoulder.

Morant got hurt in practice on Saturday, the Grizzlies said. The two-time All-Star was in a sling for the Grizzlies' game against Phoenix on Sunday, and then the news came a day later about how serious the issue us.

"Following ongoing soreness and instability, Morant underwent an MRI that revealed an underlying labral tear," the Grizzlies said.

Morant missed the first 25 games of the season while serving an NBA suspension for displaying a gun on social media—his second such suspension in less than a year, after missing eight games last season for a similar offense.

He returned from the 25-game suspension and averaged 25.1 points in nine games, with the Grizzlies going 6-3 in those contests.

The Grizzlies are 7-20 without Morant this season, are 4 1/2 games out of the final play-in spot in the Western Conference and now have to go the rest of the way without their best player. A playoff push, with Morant, didn't seem completely unreasonable. Without him, the long odds just got much longer.

It seems as though the severity of the shoulder issue caught the Grizzlies offguard. On Sunday, Grizzlies coach Taylor Jenkins said Morant was dealing with soreness and even went as far as to say he it would be a game-time decision against the Suns.

Morant is in the first season of a five-year, $197 million contract. He's earning about $34 million this season, though lost about $7.6 million of that because of the 25-game suspension.

Morant's 25-game suspension without pay was announced in June. Commissioner Adam Silver handed that penalty down three months after issuing what became an eight-game ban after Morant held a gun in a suburban Denver nightclub while streaming himself live on Instagram.

Another livestream in May, this time while sharing the front seat of a car with one of his friends, showed Morant displaying a weapon again—leading to the 25-game suspension.

NBA fines Nets $100,000 for violating participation policy by resting 4 players

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

The NBA fined the Brooklyn Nets $100,000 on Thursday, marking the first time a team was sanctioned for violating the league's player participation policy that went into effect this season.

The Nets held out four rotation players—starters Spencer Dinwiddie, Nic Claxton and Cam Johnson, along with key reserve Dorian Finney-Smith—in what became a 144-122 loss to the Milwaukee Bucks on Dec. 27. Three of the players Brooklyn started that night logged 12 minutes or less.

Brooklyn asserted that giving players rest on the second night of a back-to-back—at the start of a stretch where the Nets would play six times in nine days—was best for its club. But the league made clear to teams entering this season that resting multiple players, who are healthy enough to play, at once will no longer be overlooked.

"We've talked to all 30 teams about, 'Hey, there is a way to rest your players,'" NBA executive vice president and head of basketball operations Joe Dumars said. "What we've said is sitting four or five guys at one time is not that way. So, if you want to get your players rest, there are ways to do this. But if you do it in a way where it becomes egregious in terms of sitting four or five guys at a time, that's just not what we're about in an 82-game league."

The league's investigation included a review by an independent physician. The NBA said those resting players "could have played under the medical standard in the Player Participation Policy, which was adopted prior to this season. The organization's conduct violated the Policy, which is intended to promote player participation in the NBA's 82-game season."

After the game against the Bucks, Nets coach Jacque Vaughn insisted the team didn't treat the game as if it was a meaningless preseason contest. It was the second night of a back-to-back for Brooklyn and Vaughn said he didn't want to put any player "in harm's way."

"I have too much respect for the dudes that suit up and put their body on the line and the competition level to even mention the word exhibition," Vaughn said that night.

The Nets went 0-4 on the four-game road trip that followed the game against the Bucks, losing each of those last three games by double figures. They are 2-10 in their last 12 contests to fall to 15-20 overall and ninth in the Eastern Conference. They resume play Friday at home against Oklahoma City.

The league's board of governors approved the new policy—which the NBA says was put together out of "consideration for the interests of fans, integrity of the game, player health, competitive fairness among teams, and transparency"—in September. Teams can be fined $100,000 for the first violation, $250,000 for the second and then an additional $1 million gets tacked on for all subsequent violations.

Commissioner Adam Silver said before the season that the current participation policy boils down to a simple thought: If a player can play, the expectation is they should play.

"This is not about, 'You can't rest your players,'" Dumars said. "It's about how you do it, and that's not the way to do it."

Bills, Cowboys were biggest winners in Week 18, securing No. 2 seeds

By ROB MAADDI
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Dak Prescott and the Dallas Cowboys made sure they'll start the playoffs at home, where they're undefeated. Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills are going home with a division title instead of heading back to Miami for a rematch.

The NFL playoff field is set. Fourteen teams will compete for a trip to Super Bowl 58 in Las Vegas next month. The postseason starts with six games across three days over wild-card weekend.

The Bills rallied for a 21-14 win over the Dolphins on Sunday night to clinch their fourth straight AFC East title and the No. 2 seed. The Packers and Buccaneers got in with wins earlier in the day. The Steelers secured their spot when the Jaguars collapsed in Tennessee. Jacksonville's loss gave the Texans a division title, completing their last-to-first turnaround.

No. 1 seeds Baltimore and San Francisco rested several starters in Week 18. The Lions and Eagles didn't because they had a shot at the NFC's No. 2 seed and both teams suffered potentially significant injuries.

Patrick Mahomes sat while backup Blaine Gabbert guided the defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs to victory with the AFC's No. 3 seed already locked up. Matthew Stafford watched Carson Wentz lead the Rams to a comeback win over the 49ers as Cleveland prepared for just its second playoff appearance in 21 seasons.

Six teams are in the playoffs—Browns, Lions, Packers, Texans, Rams, Steelers—after missing out last season. At least four teams who failed to qualify one season have reached the playoffs the next every year since 1990.

A few reunions highlight the opening round.

Stafford, who was 0-3 in the playoffs with the Lions, goes back to Detroit with the Rams (10-7). The Lions (12-5) tied a franchise record for wins in a regular season and will seek their first playoff victory since beating Dallas on Jan. 5, 1992. They will play on Sunday night.

Detroit lost rookie tight end Sam LaPorta to a knee injury in a 30-20 win over Minnesota. Lions coach Dan Campbell said "it's not good news " but not as bad as it seemed when LaPorta was carted to the locker room.

Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy will face his former team when Jordan Love leads the Packers (9-8) to Dallas on Sunday afternoon. The Cowboys (12-5) routed Washington 38-10 to clinch the NFC East title and will host Green Bay aiming to stay unbeaten at home this season.

"They've had a good year," McCarthy said of the Packers. "I haven't watched them a whole lot. The drama of it, I'm sure you all will love. I will not participate this year. It's playoff time. It doesn't matter who we play, to be honest with you."

Miami's loss dropped the Dolphins (11-6) to the sixth seed. Instead of hosting Buffalo again next week, they have to visit Kansas City (11-6) on Saturday night. Dolphins superstar wide receiver Tyreek Hill plays against the team he helped win a Super Bowl four years ago. The Chiefs beat the Dolphins 21-14 in Germany in Week 9.

The Buccaneers (9-8) secured their third straight NFC South title with a 9-0 win at Carolina and they'll host struggling Philadelphia on Monday night. The Eagles (11-6) played like a team that already quit in a 27-10 loss to the Giants. The defending NFC champions limp to the playoffs after a late-season collapse, having lost five of the last six games.

Star wide receiver A.J. Brown left the game with a knee injury, though coach Nick Sirianni is hopeful he won't miss time.

The Buccaneers beat the Eagles in a wild-card playoff game two years ago in the last of Tom Brady's 35 career playoff wins. Baker Mayfield and a tough Tampa Bay defense led by safety Antoine Winfield Jr. stand in Philly's way now.

"We have a lot to fix; we have a lot to do better," Eagles center Jason Kelce said. "This is our worst stretch of football since Nick has been here and it is very, very frustrating, but we are in the playoffs and it's one-and-done and you're out. We have the Buccaneers next week and we are going to focus and prepare to try and go win the game."

The Browns-Texans matchup kicks off the postseason on Saturday afternoon. The teams met in Week 16 with Cleveland routing Houston 36-22 but C.J. Stroud didn't play in that game. The sensational rookie quarterback finished off an impressive regular season with an outstanding performance in a 23-19 do-or-die win at Indianapolis on Saturday night.

Buffalo (11-6) finished off a dramatic turnaround by defeating Miami for its fifth straight win to close out the regular season. The Bills will host the Steelers (10-7) on Sunday afternoon.

"If you would've told me at the beginning of the year, 11-6, AFC East champions, No. 2 seed, sign me up," Allen said. "It may have been ugly. We'll take it."

Thirteen games to go. Thirteen teams will go home with a loss. One team will hoist the Vince Lombardi Trophy on Feb. 11.

AP

Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott (4) raises his arm as he heads off the field after an NFL football game against the Washington Commanders, Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024, in Landover, Md.

Analysis: More NFL teams could make coaching changes if they stumble early in the playoffs

By ROB MAADDI
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

It was a slow "Black Monday" across the NFL while everyone waits on Bill Belichick's future with the New England Patriots.

The Washington Commanders, as expected, fired coach Ron Rivera after his fourth straight losing season. The Carolina Panthers fired general manager Scott Fitterer after finishing an NFL-worst 2-15.

The Atlanta Falcons didn't even wait until Monday to fire Arthur Smith, releasing him late Sunday night, hours after a dismal 48-17 loss at New Orleans on a day that began with a division title still within grasp if Tampa Bay had lost.

The Commanders and Falcons join the Panthers, Raiders and Chargers in a search for a new head coach. Whether the Patriots join that list is the big question.

Belichick just completed his worst season in 29 years as a head coach. The Patriots went 4-13 and missed the playoffs for the third time in the past four years.

Belichick, of course, led New England to six Super Bowl titles during an unprecedented run of success across two decades before Tom Brady left the team after the 2019 season.

But the Patriots are just 29-38 since Brady left with only one playoff appearance in 2021. Mac Jones, who led them to a 10-7 season as a rookie, was benched for the final six games and it's likely the team will pursue another quarterback in the offseason. New England owns the No. 3 pick in a QB-rich draft.

Belichick will meet with owner Robert Kraft to discuss the team's next steps and his. The 71-year-old coach confirmed Monday he's under contract and is open to relinquishing full control of personnel decisions.

Belichick is 27 wins away from passing Don Shula for No. 1 on the career list and is expected to pursue another coaching job if he doesn't stay in New England. Several teams would be interested in a coach with his pedigree.

Still, despite Belichick's resume, Michigan's Jim Harbaugh would probably be the most sought-after candidate.

For now, Belichick is still a Patriot.

"I'm going to do everything I can every day to do the best I can to help our football team," he said. "That's what I've always done. It's never been any different for me in my career. I learned that lesson from my dad growing up. You work for the team that you're working for and do the best you can for it, until somebody tells you different. So, that's not going to change."

Other prominent head coaches could end up losing their jobs if they lose in the playoffs this weekend.

It wouldn't be a surprise if Mike McCarthy's future with the Dallas Cowboys is tied to how far the team goes in the postseason. The Cowboys finished 12-5 for the third straight season and secured their second NFC East title in two years along with the No. 2 seed. But they're only 1-2 in the playoffs under McCarthy and haven't reached the NFC championship game since the 1995 season.

If the Cowboys somehow lose to the Green Bay Packers (9-8) on Sunday or in the divisional round, Jerry Jones' patience may run out.

Nick Sirianni might be under the most fire heading into the playoffs. The defending NFC champion Eagles lost five of six and went from 10-1 to 11-6 and having to travel to Tampa Bay for a wild-card game.

After falling just short in the Super Bowl against Kansas City last season, it was championship or bust for Philadelphia. Sirianni is 34-17 in three seasons with three playoff appearances.

But a fickle fan base that didn't want him in the first place and fell in love with him over a 26-5 stretch suddenly wishes he's gone. A loss to the mediocre Buccaneers (9-8) next Monday night could force owner Jeffrey Lurie's hand, although it would seem Sirianni has earned another season given his record of success.

"Ever since I've been here, whether it was we started off 2-5, whether it was that we won 16 games last year, whether it was we started off 10-1, whether it was that we've lost five of our last six because we've been through ups and we've been through downs, and he's been nothing but supportive toward me the entire time I've been here," Sirianni said. "Through any tough decision I've ever had to make, through any personnel, anything like that, anything with a game decision, Mr. Lurie has been nothing but completely supportive and willing to do anything in his power to help us win football games. And that's what I respect so much about him. And so, man, I couldn't thank him enough and be more grateful to have him as our owner and the leader of our organization."

Don't rule out a change in Buffalo if the Bills stumble in the playoffs. They overcame a 6-6 start and won five in a row to secure a fourth straight AFC East title and the No. 2 seed. But getting in isn't enough for Buffalo. The Bills may need to reach the AFC championship game to keep coach Sean McDermott in charge. They'll open the playoffs against the Pittsburgh Steelers (10-7) on Sunday.

"There's more work to be done and more improvements to be had by our team," McDermott said.

Corum scores 2 TDs, Michigan overpowers Washington 34-13

» Jim Harbaugh delivers a national title

AP

Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh celebrates with the trophy after their win in the national championship NCAA College Football Playoff game against Washington Monday, Jan. 8, 2024, in Houston.

HOUSTON (AP)—Jim Harbaugh raised the championship trophy as gold and white confetti sprayed over his team and "We Are the Champions" blared.

Nine years after he took over at Michigan, Harbaugh delivered on the lofty expectations that he brought with him to his beloved alma mater.

Blake Corum ran for 134 yards and two fourth-quarter touchdowns as Harbaugh and the top-ranked Wolverines—undeterred by suspensions and a sign-stealing case that shadowed the program—completed a three-year surge to a national title by beating No. 2 Washington 34-13 Monday night in the College Football Playoff.

"We're innocent and we stood strong and tall because we knew we were innocent. And I'd like to point that out," Harbaugh said when asked about off-field issues, jumping in to answer a question posed to his players. "And these guys are innocent. And overcome that? It wasn't that hard because we knew we were innocent.

"(The season) went exactly how we wanted it to go. It went exactly how we wanted it to go."

The Wolverines (15-0) sealed their first national title since 1997 when Corum, who scored the winning touchdown in overtime against Alabama in the Rose Bowl semifinal, blasted in from the 1-yard line with 3:37 left to put Michigan up by 21 and set off another rousing rendition of "The Victors."

After nine seasons coaching his alma mater and in his third consecutive playoff appearance, Harbaugh delivered the title so many expected when he took over a struggling powerhouse in 2015—despite missing six regular-season games this season while serving separate suspensions.

"That man, he's the reason we're here today," Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy said of his coach.

And Harbaugh did it with a team his old coach, Bo Schembechler, would have adored. The Wolverines ran for 303 yards against Washington (14-1), and their rugged defense held Michael Penix Jr. and the Huskies' prolific passing game to just one touchdown while intercepting the Heisman Trophy runner-up twice.

"There are more than 100 Michigan men who are on this team," Harbaugh said. "What they've done is amazing. They will forever be known as national champions."

Penix's remarkable six-year college career ended with maybe his worst performance of the season. Usually unfazed by pressure, Penix was not nearly as precise against a Michigan defense that took away his signature deep throws.

"That was a spectacular game by our defense," Harbaugh said.

The Indiana transfer who came back from two knee surgeries and two shoulder injuries was roughed up by the Wolverines, limping at times, stepped on another time.

Asked how he was feeling, Penix said, still undaunted: "Better than I was three years ago."

Penix finished 27 for 51 for 255 yards and a touchdown as the Huskies had their 21-game winning streak snapped.

"They've given me everything they possible can," coach Kalen DeBoer said of a group of players who went 4-8 just two seasons ago and 25-3 since he took over in 2022.

McCarthy had a modest game, throwing for 140 yards and running for 31. But it was enough for him to improve to 27-1 as a starter for the Wolverines.

Michigan gave Washington a taste of life in the Big Ten, where the Pac-12 champions are heading next season, and the Huskies were up for the grind for a while.

Two long touchdown runs by Donovan Edwards and 229 yards rushing in the first quarter put the Wolverines up 17-3 early in the second and conjured up memories of last year's historic Georgia blowout of TCU.

Washington stabilized and didn't allow the Wolverines another point in the first half. After the Huskies stopped Michigan on a fourth-and-2 from the UW 38 with 4:46 left in the second quarter, Penix went to work.

He found Jalen McMillan on a fourth-and-goal with 42 seconds left for a 3-yard touchdown. After being on the verge of getting buried by the Wolverines, the Huskies fans sang along to "Who Let the Dogs Out," happily down 17-10 at half.

Will Johnson's interception of Penix on the first play of the second half gave Michigan another opportunity to open up a two-touchdown lead, but the Huskies forced another field goal by James Turner to make it 20-10.

"Today was a complete, complete team effort," Corum said.

Michigan nursed a touchdown lead until halfway through the fourth quarter, when it put together 71-yard drive, capped by Corum's tackle-breaking 12-yard touchdown that finally gave the Wolverines some room with a 27-13 lead and 7:09 left.

Corum, the engine of ground-and-pound offense and heart and soul of a team loaded with fourth-, fifth- and even sixth-year players, missed the CFP last year with a knee injury. He was named offensive player of the national title game in the final four-team College Football Playoff before it expands to 12 teams next year.

"Michigan, this is for you," Corum told the Wolverines fans.

Michigan seemed to be steaming toward a third consecutive Big Ten championship and playoff appearance when in October it was revealed the NCAA was investigating the program for potentially breaking rules that prohibit in-person scouting of opponents and using video equipment to attempt decode opponents' play signals.

The scandal turned Connor Stalions, the low-level Michigan recruiting staffer accused of orchestrating the scheme, into a household name and threatened to derail the Wolverines' season.

The NCAA process will linger well into 2024 and it is unknown what penalties Michigan could face. The Big Ten, though, decided to act quickly and punished Michigan by suspending Harbaugh for the final three games of the regular season, including matchups with Penn State and rival Ohio State.

With offensive coordinator Sherrone Moore taking Harbaugh's place, it became Michigan vs. Everybody and nobody could stop the Wolverines.

Harbaugh returned for the postseason, completed the mission and got to celebrate with his father, Jack—himself a former college football coach—as he accepted the trophy.

Michigan became the first college football program to record 1,000 victories in November and won its third national title in January.

BANSIL

From page 20

two at-bats, three runs scored, and two RBIs. Bansil is also tied with the most doubles at two as of Jan 8. Alvin Takai, Cris George, Ed Manibusan, Eric Palacios, J-Boy Deleon Guerrero, Jun Salalila, Shine Tenorio, and Tony Pangelinan are tied with him, while Audie Maratita leads with four.

The league leaders are the Reds' Hector Efraim with the highest batting average among all sluggers with .818, from nine hits out of 11 plate appearances. Second is the Dodgers' Glen Camacho at .714, from 10 out of 14 at-bats, and third is Pirates' Maratita with a .625 average from 10 out of 16 at-bats.

Maratita also leads the sluggers with 14 RBIs; Palacios and Pete Tomokane are at nine each; Richard Quitugua and Shine Tenorio have eight each; Bruce Norita, Jess Mesa, and John Acosta hit seven each; and Camacho hit six.

James Benavente leads the runs scored column with 14; Derek Aguon is at 12; Takai and Cartfield Sablan have 11 each; Jerome Delos Santos and Tomokane have 10 each; and Camacho and Manibusan have nine each.

Cartfield Sablan and Quitugua have the most triples with two; and Dennis Cruz, Manibusan, Eric Tudela, James Benavente, Jeff Cruz, Mario Aguon, Myron Sablan, Pete Tomokane, Jason Reyes, and Mike Techur hit one each.

Pirates' Dung Tenorio is still the pitching leader with less than one ERA at .78 from three games and nine innings pitched, and one ER from eight hits. Second is Dodgers' Jeff Cruz with a .89 ERA. He has pitched eight innings in two games and has one ER with two hits. Pirates' Pete Sablan completes the Top 3 pitchers with a little over one ERA at 1.56. He pitched nine innings in three games and has two ER with nine hits.

The strikeout king is Kelvin Kapileo with 20. Far behind him are pitchers Pete Sablan with 13; Jeff Cruz is at 12; Tony Flores has nine; Bill Camacho, Dung Tenorio, and Joe Kapileo have eight each; Takai collected seven; Clint Quitugua and Tony Benavente threw six; and Cris Pangelinan, Dominic Hideo, and Joe Terlaje have five each.

RUN

From page 20

In the first 5K of the 2023 edition, Joel Buco rolled up Mt. Tapochao first at 31:36, and Rosemarie Chisato was the first woman at 36:33.

The last 5K was topped by Veloria and Bang again at 20:21 and 24:55 respectively.

Chad Taflinger was the overall male champion of the 2023 Trinity race series from tallies of all three race times from Day 1 Kensington to Marpi and back 10K course, Day 2 Mt. Tapochao 1-way 5K course, Day 3 Oleai Beach Road Pathway 5K course.

Taflinger owned the fastest overall time of 1:43:52, earning him the gold medal. His Day 1 time was 49:02, his Day 2 time was 32:49, and his Day 3 time was 22:01.

In the women's division, Bang conquered all scenic race day courses and came out the overall champion with a time of 1:56:42.

Bang started Day 1 on top with a time of 54:56, slipped to second place on Day 2 with a time of 37:21, then returned to first place on Day 3 with a time of 24:55.

For more information, contact (670)-287-0891 or email runsaipan@gmail.com.

SANTOS

From page 20

petitions, I will just continue training, keeping my weight in check, and see from there."

According to the OWF website, the OWF was established on Nov. 6, 1980, in Melbourne, Australia. Since 1980 with the exception of 1983, 1991, and 1995, annual championships have been held.

In 1993 in Nauru the first South Pacific Championships was held together with the Oceania Championships. Since then, the two Championships have been held simultaneously.

Pacers rally past Celtics after Haliburton injures hamstring.

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Corum scores 2 TDs, Michigan overpowers Washington 34-13.

PAGE 19

Santos ranks Top 10 in 2 categories of OWF

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Pacific Games multi-medalist weightlifter Ray Santos is ranked in the Top 10 of two weight categories in the Oceania Weightlifting Federation regional rankings for 2023.

He ranks No. 2 in the total weight lifted of 208 kg at a bodyweight of 54.6 kg in the senior men 55-kg weight category.

In the senior men 61-kg weight category, he ranks No. 7 with a total weight lifted of 215 kg at bodyweight of 56.7 kg.

He improved upon his numbers from 2022 when he was also second in the senior men 55-kg with a total weight of 207 kg. In the 61-kg weight class, he ranked No. 7 with a total weight lifted of 205 kg.

Santos won gold in the snatch lift (96 kg) of the weightlifting competition in the 2023 Pacific Games, won silver in the overall weight lifted (208 kg) and the concurrent OWF Championships, and bronze in the clean & jerk (112 kg).

The 32-year-old teacher aide at Koblerville Elementary School said of his Top 10 placement, "I'm blessed to be able to compete despite injuries and being able to place in the Top 10. I feel good, I worked hard and made sacrifices so I'm proud of myself for making it to the Top 10."

Asked if he expected to make the shortlist, he said, "No I wasn't expecting anything. I'm just really after the Oceania records for the 55-kg weight class."

He said he will not be competing in the OWF Championships this year despite his knees feeling a lot better. He said it's still not at "110%." During his competition in the Pacific Games, Santos felt his knees hurting during his clean & jerk lifts but still managed to win bronze.

As for when he will compete next, he said, "I can't say. We shall see."

On what he's been up to post competition, he said, "I started training again and just focusing on regaining the strength I lost from the injury. Also maintaining my weight so I don't have to cut a lot before a competition. Whatever God has planned for me with upcoming com-

See SANTOS on Page 19

LEIGH GASES

2023 Pacific Games multi-medalist weightlifter Ray Santos is ranked in the Top 10 of two weight categories in the Oceania Weightlifting Federation regional rankings for 2023.

Run Saipan Trinity '24 Race this weekend

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Only the bravest runners are ready to take on the first Run Saipan challenge of the year—the 2024 Trinity race series—as it weaves runners through different scenic locations around the island.

Day 1 is set for Saturday, Jan. 13, at 6am for a 10K race through the Beach Road Pathway.

Day 2 is a steep 5K run to the summit of Mt. Tapochao at 6am on Sunday, Jan. 14.

To cap it off, a last 5K at Marpi Route 30 is scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 15, at 6am.

An interactive medal holder pieces together each finisher medal given at the end of each race. Runners will receive a lanyard to clip with each medal piece.

The medal holder comes with the three-day package worth $40. Each individual race is $20.

Top 3 men and women medals will be awarded for each race day. However, Run Saipan will award the top male and female overall. There is no overall Top 3 this year, just the fastest accumulated for the fastest male and female runner.

To register, click the link https://raceroster.com/events/2024/82540/trinity-24.

Sildrey Veloria, clocked in first 45:39 in the 2023 edition of the Trinity's 10K. Ann Bang was first in the women's division at 54:36.

See RUN on Page 19

LEIGH GASES

The Run Saipan '24 Trinity race series is set for Saturday, Jan. 13, Sunday, Jan. 14, and Monday, Jan. 15. It will span three different routes with a 10K and two 5K races.

Bansil hits 1st homer; Efraim, Tenorio lead Masters League

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Dodgers' main catcher Robert Bansil is in a league of his own as he hit the first home run of the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League during their game against the Blue Jays last Friday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

He led his team to victory with his two-run home run, along with a perfect two-for-

See BANSIL on Page 19

LEIGH GASES

The Dodgers' Robert Bansil hit the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League's first home run in a game against the Blue Jays last Friday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.